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Beginnings of the St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony for the Iroquois

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BEGINNINGS OF THE ST. FRANCIS
XAVIER MISSION COLONY
FOR THE IROQUOIS

by

Andrew Anthony Connolly, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

Andrew Anthony Connolly was born in New York City on the 24th day of July, 1928.

In September, 1942, he entered Fordham Preparatory School, New York City, and graduated in June, 1946. In September of the same year he entered the New York Province of the Society of Jesus, and made his Novitiate and Juniorate at St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, New York. In September 1950 he transferred to Loyola University, Chicago, and from that same university received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June 1952. In the same month he registered as a graduate student in the Department of History of Loyola University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When the flagship, Santa Maria weighed anchor off the coast of Watling Island in the Bahamas late in the 15th century, Christopher Columbus was inaugurating a new phase in the history of the world. The subsequent three centuries were to be the era of discovery, exploration, and colonization in North and South America. In the 16th century Spain and Portugal were the chief contestants in the race for the privileges of the New World. England and France entered the field of reconnaissance and exploration a short while later.¹ However it was not until the 17th century that these two nations undertook the task of colonizing the territories to which they had laid claim.

Names and dates of explorers and colonizers of New France familiar to every Canadian school boy are the following: Verrazano, who in 1524 explored for France the coast of North America from Florida to Nova Scotia; Cartier, who ten years later sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as Montreal; De Monts, the Calvinist, who in 1604 managed a temporary settlement at Port Royal, Nova Scotia; Fathers Biard and Massé, who at this same colony

¹In 1497, John Cabot, a native of Genoa, in the service of Henry VII of England, made a voyage from Bristol to Cape Breton Island in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and reported back that he too had reached China.

played the role of the first Jesuit missionaries of New France. It was not until 1608 that the first permanent post was established by Samuel de Champlain on the Rock of Quebec. The reason for the long gap between discovery and colonization was the sixteenth century wars of France, continental wars and civil wars of religion. The Edict of Nantes in 1598 brought a surface peace to a nation tired of fighting.

The motives for the colonial movement of the French were desire of wealth and prestige, together with a sincere passion for the spread of the Church of Christ. "Wealth" in the dreams of the French merchants had many forms, - a new route to the East, gold and silver, diamonds from mines in the newly discovered territory; - but in later years there dreams meant only one thing, the fur of the beaver. The second motive that impelled Frenchmen to set up their homes in distant lands was prestige for the French crown, for it was the crown that supported every enterprise. The king of France would have his royal authority established over subject people. It is the third purpose of the French, their apostolic endeavor in all their colonies, that interests us in this thesis. The establishment of royal authority over the Indians was an objective necessary as a means to secure fur; it sometimes helped the spread of the Faith.

The purpose of this thesis is to relate an attempt of the French Jesuit missionaries at the solution to the problems of establishing the Catholic Church among a segment of those Indians, among the Five Nations of the Iroquois. In the second chapter we shall outline and describe fully the specific problems that had to be overcome in the Iroquois apostolate. This introductory chapter wishes to expose the purpose of the

Jesuits' missionary activity among the Iroquois as gleaned from their writings and to describe the Indians who were known as the Five Nations, or the Iroquois.

The science of missiology is to the missionary what theology is to the Catholic priest. Yet, as a separate systematized science missiology had been neglected in the 16th century for explicable reasons.² At the time of the great discoveries, the theologians were occupied in internal quarrels about Christianity; it was the era of the Protestant revolt. Luther had tacked his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg in 1517, and Calvin published The Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536. Right on the heels of the Reformation came the Catholic Counter-Reformation with the Council of Trent defining dogmas and protecting the Eucharist and other Sacraments against the errors of the Novatores. Later, in France, the theological battle was against Jansenism in all its oft-recurring forms. In the midst of such pressing attacks at the very heart of the Church, no one thought of systematizing the doctrine of the propagation of the Faith. It is really only in the last thirty years that any concerted effort has been made along these lines by theologians.³

²Charles, Pierre, S.J., Les Dossiers de l'Action Missionnaire (Louvain, 1938), pp. 17-18.

³There is a greater need today than at any other time for a knowledge of the aims and objectives of missionary activity and the best means to obtain these ends. Bishop Sheen has noted that mission work today is greater than at any time since the Edict of Milan. Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen, "A Commentary on Evangelii Praecones," World Mission (September, 1951), II, 4.

Father Pierre Charles, S.J. was the main proponent of the school of thought that is today accepted by the majority in missionary circles. Father Charles analyzed Christian missions from earliest times and from the data determined the causes of missionary activity. The final cause, the raison d'etre of the missions was "the desire, the need to establish (in the territory where the visible Church was absent) the visible Church, and to spread even further her domain."⁴ Without a clearly defined purpose missionaries in the past have often enough placed the stress in the wrong place. Years were lost to the Church in China by making Christianity "a coolie religion." Missionary accommodation is not a new concept, but it was not widely accepted or practiced everywhere Christian apostles went. Among the missionaries in Canada in the 17th century the exact purpose of missionary work was taken for granted, never clearly stated. That "the Father of the Canadian Missions," Father Paul Le Jeune, S.J. had the same idea as Father Charles was later to extract from his studies, can be inferred from the immediate objectives that he proposed to his men. For instance, he saw that work among the nomadic tribes was futile, practically speaking, and that agricultural villages had to be organized for them. He was one of the few who proposed education as a good means to obtain the end of missionary endeavor. Father Le Jeune deserves our praise for his efforts to learn more about those among whom the Jesuit missionaries were laboring. The adage has it that "education begins with the study of the child to be educated," and as superior of the Canadian Mission, the Indians were his pupils, the Christian Religion was the subject to be

⁴Charles, p. 24. Italics in the original.

taught. Father Le Jeune gathered reports from the men in the field and analyzed them for their missionary implications.⁵

The purpose of his missionary labor was expressed by a missionary to the Mohawks in 1666: "the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ upon the ruins of that of Satan who is exerting all his efforts to the contrary."⁶ Father Chaumonot addressed the Onondaga nation of Iroquois to the same effect but in keeping with the Indian style of oratory. The last present he had to offer the Iroquois was the Faith: "Not for traffic do we appear in your country; our aim is much higher. Keep your beaver, if you like for the Dutch. What comes to our hands shall be employed for your service. We seek not perishable things. For the Faith alone have we left our land; for the Faith have we traversed the ocean; for the Faith have we left the great ships of the French to enter into your tiny canoes; for the Faith I hold in my hand the present before you and open my lips to summon you to keep the word given at Quebec."⁷

One can however get the impression from a cursory reading of the Jesuit Relations dealing with the work among the Iroquois, that their activity was at times based on weak theology. Was pity their main motive in their

⁵A French Jesuit missionary...like Fr. Paul Le Jeune, had for his assignment teaching, (he would have said bringing to) the Indians the Christian Faith. Therefore, he was of necessity compelled, in our current jargon, to establish communication with them. He would have to learn their language and then their customs, crafts, religious ideas, methods of warfare, weaknesses..." George N. Shuster, "Preface," The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, ed. Edna Kenton, (New York, 1954).

⁶Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, (Cleveland, 1896-1901), LI, 215-217.

⁷Jesuit Relations, XLII, 87.

missionary activity, possessed as they perhaps were by the conviction that all the Indian pagans were destined for hell? What about the salvific will of the good God? Now and then the narratives seem to indicate that the missionaries considered as their chief task, sometimes their sole occupation, the baptizing of dying children. From many quarters the greatest delight of the missionaries was that they sent many "to swell the Church triumphant."⁸ In 1661 we find Father Simon Lamoyne rejoicing that "The smallpox opportunely supervened causing a rich harvest of those innocent souls" who received Baptism from his hands.⁹ At the Onondaga canton in 1683 the Fathers Jacques and Jean de Lamberville had been granted the favor that all captives should be brought to the chapel for instruction and Baptism before being burned at the stake.¹⁰ This emphasis on the Church triumphant while the Church militant was still in its infancy can possibly be explained by the circumstances in which the Jesuit missionaries in the Iroquois cantons found themselves. To say that the atmosphere of the Iroquois village was not fruitful for the spread of the Faith is an understatement. In quiet moments the missionary would admit that his chief aim was the establishment of the visible Church, but often enough the sole means seemed to be, as Father Dablon pointed out, the suffering of persecution. "The Fathers endure everything, and are prepared for everything for they know that the apostles planted

⁸Ibid., LXI, 21.

⁹Ibid., XLVII, 193.

¹⁰Ibid., LXII, 239-241.

the Faith not otherwise than through persecutions and through sufferings. That which consoles them is to see the fruits that God derives therefrom for his glory and for the salvation of these same savages by whom they are so ill-treated."¹¹

Thus, though no clearly formulated missiology preserved them from wrong turns here and there, yet their great zeal often enough supplied for what they lacked in strategy. The French Jesuits also had the advantage of profiting from the example of the Jesuit mission endeavors in other parts of the world. Just as France was a late comer on the colonial scene, so also in the missionary field of labor. A Spanish Jesuit had been martyred on North American soil more than half a century before French Jesuits Biard and Massé set foot on Canadian soil, a century before Xavier Mission Colony was begun.¹² The French Jesuits were fortunate in belonging to a world wide organization, a chief ministry of which society was work on the foreign missions. From the Jesuit Relations it is clear that the missionaries in New France were acquainted with the activity of their brethren in other sectors of the missionary world. They were helped by the example of the Portuguese Jesuit Anchieta in Brazil, "the Xavier of the West," as well as by the spirit of Jesuit Ricci in China who had died and left behind a record of missionary accommodation before the Iroquois apostolate was tackled. During

¹¹Ibid., IX, 173-175.

¹²In 1566 Father Pedro Martinez was killed by savages on a small island off the coast of Florida near St. Augustine. Michael Kenney, S.J., The Romance of the Floridas (New York, 1934) p. 188.

the first years of the Canadian Mission reports were received of the work of the young Italian Jesuit De Nobili in India, and from another part of the world there was news of the wonderful reductions of the Jesuits in Paraguay, prototypes of mission colonies for nomadic Indians.

By 1667, the year that Xavier Mission Colony for the Iroquois became a little more than a mere concept, as well as the year that the five cantons of the Iroquois had accepted resident missionaries, the Church in New France had made significant advances, but had also suffered severe setbacks. At Quebec, a boarding school, a hospital, and a convent had been set up, even before the population exceeded three hundred. In 1659 the first Bishop of Quebec landed on the shores of New France, Bishop Francois de Montmorency Laval. All was not steady gain for the Church in New France; a severe setback was the Huron dispersal. Eight Jesuits had been martyred during one decade, all but one of them victims of an Iroquois.

We must first distinguish the Five Nations from the other Indian tribes in the northeastern part of the continent before listing the problems of the Iroquois apostolate, the obstacles to missionary activity, the hindrances to the attainment of the missionary goal among these Indians. There are difficulties in separating the various Indian tribes into families. Because of their migrations, because of overlapping territories, a geographical distinction is unsatisfactory. Division by means of philology seems best. Reuben Gold Thwaites, an authority on this matter by reason of his editorship of Jesuit Relations distinguishes two big classes of Indians, the Algonquin tribes and the Huron-Iroquois tribes.¹³ Of these two the Algonquins are the

¹³

Jesuit Relations, I, 9-10.

more culturally primitive, the more nomadic race, subsisting mainly on hunting and fishing, their homes crude wigwams. The Iroquois differing from the Algonquins in language and manner of living possess the same basic language and have attained the same agricultural level of subsistence as the Hurons. However, the Iroquois were bitter rivals of the Hurons. The cause of this rivalry we shall try to fathom later in this study. In comparison to the Algonquins, the semi-sedentary Indians, especially the Hurons among whom the Jesuits first concentrated their efforts, were the nobles of the forest. They were the greatest hope for the Church in Canada, and it was a sad day when, after ten years of fruitful missionary activity, the Jesuits turned their backs on their old mission stations in Huronia desolated by the hit and run attacks of the Iroquois.¹⁴

Who are these Iroquois? What kind of political union did the Five Nations have? What were their chief characteristics? It is not known, when the Iroquois confederation was formed, some authors claiming that this unique intertribal government was created under the leadership of the semi-legendary Hiawatha around 1450.¹⁵ This seems to be an erroneous conjecture based on an Iroquois legend. In 1609 we do find a reference to the Iroquois when Champlain aided his Algonquin allies in dispersing an Iroquois war party, but it was not until about 1630 that we find the Five Nations of the Iroquois manifesting unanimity of decision. It appears that when the French came to

¹⁴ The Hurons, with a population of around 16,000, had their ancestral home in the territory between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay on Lake Huron. Ibid., I, 21.

¹⁵ John H. Kennedy, Jesuit and Savage in New France (New Haven, 1950), p. 24.

the New World, the Iroquois were just a weak tribe constantly badgered by the numerically superior Algonquins. When we speak of the Iroquois in this thesis we restrict the term to the Five Nations who lived in palisaded villages south of Lake Ontario and east of Lake Erie in what is now Central New York State. From the easternmost nation to the westernmost they are: the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas. The two former are sometimes referred to as the Lower Iroquois, and the three latter as the Upper Iroquois, those further inland being considered as further upstream. Their population never exceeded seventeen thousand, more recent research placing the mark closer to twelve thousand.¹⁶

The political organization of these Five Nations was well adapted to give freedom to each tribe while assuring united action in what concerned them all. At the outbreak of the American War for Independence some Iroquois are said to have recommended their system of government as a model to be imitated by the American patriots.¹⁷ Though the Iroquois themselves would prefer death to slavery, and though little is ever found about their being adopted into other tribes, they had the practice of integrating their captives into their Nation. No alien could become a member of the tribe except by formal adoption, which right rested solely on the mothers of the clan. The fate of the captives for life or death rested upon the will of

¹⁶George T. Hunt, Wars of the Iroquois (Madison, Wisconsin, 1940), p. 67.

¹⁷James Mooney, "Iroquois," Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1907), VIII, 169.

the women.¹⁸ The chiefs had a very important role in Iroquois society but in all important affairs, the council of elders was law.

As mentioned before, the Iroquois like the Hurons, had passed to a more sedentary life. The Anthropologist Speck, says that "agriculture has always been their mainstay in life, in fact, their economic basis."¹⁹ Their principle towns were called "castles" and were surrounded by cornfields. The Iroquois dwelling was the so-called "long house", from fifty to one hundred feet long, set up with posts for a frame and covered with bark. About twenty families, all of the same clan, lived under one roof. More will be said about the characteristics and customs and religion of the Iroquois in the following chapter, where we point out the obstacles to missionary activity among these Indians.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Hunt, p. 14.

CHAPTER II

THE MANY PRONGED PROBLEM: SAVAGERY, SUPERSTITION, AND BRANDY

With the purpose of missionary endeavor outlined, and with some idea of the people to whom the Gospel had to be preached, let us now point out the major obstacles to success in this apostolate among the Iroquois. This, the many pronged problem, can be grouped into five major categories: savage culture, superstition, licentiousness, intemperance, and a final category which for lack of a better title we shall call — other obstacles. After describing these obstacles we shall outline the proposed solution, an integrated plan, the implimentation of which the following chapters will narrate.

Let us consider their savage culture as an obstacle to setting up the Church among the Iroquois. In the past the wars and ferocious activity of the Iroquois have been stressed and heightened by observers and by historians of the Iroquois to such a degree that we think of them as naturally "cruel, secret, cunning, and inclined to blood and carnage."¹ However, it must be kept in mind that the French Jesuits who depicted the Iroquois "savages" found these Indians more often than not in the role of enemy to the French and Christian Indians and destroyer of their missions. It was the Iroquois who tomahawked seven of the eight North American Martyrs.

¹Jesuit Relations, II, 123.

The Iroquois to the cultural French Jesuit took on all the aspects of the ferocious German barbarians in ancient Gaul. The historian of this era, Francis Parkman, is accused by George Hunt of heightening the gory details from an unconscious desire for "a lurid background of fire, blood, and villainy, against which to draw the bold lines of the failure of New France."² Against Parkman's "insensate fury" and "homicidal frenzy" as an explanation of the wars of the Iroquois, Hunt has a theory which we accept with certain reservations to be seen in a later chapter that economic factors, the fur trade, were the reasons for Iroquois hostility.³ Modern anthropology has invented the science of ethno-history, by which trained investigators study the lore of the Indians in field work, to discover the origin, development and peculiarities of the race. Iroquois funeral rites, myths, chants, epical recitals, and culture in general, exhibits many peaceful elements in their life. "The old sombre picture of the Iroquois as ruthless barbarians is beginning to fade."⁴ Father Neu writing after the more turbulent era of Iroquois activity, denies as "pure fancy" the charge that the Iroquois were intrinsically savage.⁵

²Hunt, p. 187.

³Ibid. pp. 10-12.

⁴Frank Gouldsmith Speck, The Iroquois: a Study in Cultural Evolution, Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bulletin No. XXIII (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, 1945), pp. 13-14. "Such trained explorers of culture as Hewitt, Parker, Goldenweiser, Barbeau, Waugh, Speck, Hunt, and Fenton, as well as such self-trained ethnologists as Beauchamp, Keppler, Converse, Boyle, and Orr have influenced modes of thought on Iroquois life by showing the inherent pacific qualities of these people." Ibid.

⁵Jesuit Relations, LXVIII, 263.

Yet prescind from the questions of whether the Iroquois were savage and warlike by nature, or by economic necessity, the fact remains that these Indians did not comport themselves as French gentlemen, — especially when on the warpath. Some instances of their barbaric culture, better than a strong assertion, paint the true character of the Iroquois. The fact that they were not loathe to practice cannibalism is wellfounded. The flesh of their captives was eaten; the heart of John Brebeuf was devoured. Father Garheil had to struggle to free himself from an Indian who tried to bite off his nose. In 1682 Father Jean de Lamberville described how in a war with the Illinois, the Iroquois "killed and ate over six hundred on the spot, without counting those whom they burned along the road. They saved the children who could live without their mothers' milk whom they had killed; but the others were cruelly roasted and devoured."⁶ Their wars were waged against every neighbor, at one time or another; even the English in Maryland were victims of their raids.⁷ The French clergy were not the only ones who painted a somewhat bloody picture of the Iroquois; the Dutch Calvinist minister, Megapolensis, had his own opinion of their savagery: "They are very cruel to their enemies in time of war; for they first bite off the nails of the fingers of their captives, and cut off some joints, and

⁶Ibid., LXII, 71.

⁷Ibid., 67.

sometimes even whole fingers; after that the captives are forced to sing and dance before them stark naked; and finally they roast their prisoners dead before a slow fire for some days, and then eat them up. The common people eat the arms, buttocks and trunk, but the chiefs eat the head and heart."⁸ On the other hand what repelled this man most was their slovenliness; the unwashed Indians reminded him of hogs. The mangled hands of Father Jogues, which brought tears to the eyes of Queen Anne in France, and brought high praise of his sacrificial spirit from Pope Urban VIII in Rome, provides graphic evidence of their cruelty.

But over and above any cruel streak that we might discern in the Iroquois there was a quality which the Jesuits of the mission deplored time and again,—their arrogance. The Iroquois were surly allies and stubborn pagans. One historian shrewdly comments: "They treated the priests as hostages and their converts as traitors."⁹ Father Beschefer writes to his Provincial about the Iroquois:

These nations are opposed more strongly than any other to Christianity, and every day afford opportunities for practicing patience to those who seek only their good. The great successes that they have for so many years obtained over all the nations whom they have attacked, — several of whom they have completely ruined, — and the terror they have inspired in all the others have rendered them so haughty that they consider themselves the masters of the earth... They often feel naught but contempt for everything that we teach them, and for the persons who desire to instruct them.¹⁰

⁸Johannes Megapolensis, Jr., "A Short Account of the Mohawk Indians," Narratives of New Netherlands, ed. Frank Jameson (New York, 1909), pp.174-175.

⁹Kennedy, p. 45.

¹⁰Jesuit Relations, LXII, 223-225.

Considering their nature, the Jesuits decided to adapt their approach to the proud spirit of the Iroquois. They abandoned the meek exterior of Father Jogues because it was mistaken for cowardice. They assumed airs of authority and importance. Father Milet, for example, was particularly domineering with the Oneida medicine men. The Jesuits among the Iroquois more than once suggested in their writings that "there is nothing more desirable for the advancement of Christianity in this country than the humiliation of these spirits, -- breathing, as they do, only blood and carnage; making it their glory to kill and burn people; and their brutal and passionate hearts offering positive opposition to the gentle and humble spirit of Jesus Christ."¹¹ Father Bruyas noted in 1668, that the Oneida Nation was the least tractable of all the Iroquois because they were not attacked by the French. "This tribe, despising the others since their defeat, is of a temper greatly opposed to the Christian Faith; and its pride gives much exercise to a missionary's patience."¹²

European culture was lost on the Iroquois. Father Brebeuf said once that they utterly despise a person when they see that he is not as good a pack animal as they themselves are. Their unpreparedness for the Christian message weighed heavily on the missionaries sent to work among them. Father Jean de Lamberville lamented that they lacked "spiritual perception" and that even their reasoning capacity seemed absent. "The reasons for credibility which theology employs to convince the most sceptical minds, are not listened to here,

¹¹Ibid., LIV, 75.

¹²Ibid., LII, 145.

where our greatest truths are called falsehoods."¹³ His hearers evidently were not ready to accept the doctrines of Christianity, nor were they willing to give themselves as captives to Christ. "To convert the Upper Iroquois, it would be necessary to subdue them to the Faith by two arms, as it were -- one of gold, the other of iron; I mean to say, to win them by presents, and to keep them in subjection by the fear of arms. Missionaries have neither the attraction of the one nor the strength of the other."¹⁴

Obviously, the savage culture of the Iroquois Indian did not rate for him the title of anima naturaliter Christiana. He was a mere child as regards the acceptance of the Christian message, but he was very unlike a child in his belligerent and arrogant tendencies. Such a character provides fruitful opportunities for the practice of patience on the part of the missionary, but it is not apt material with which to establish the Church in a new territory.

The superstition of the Iroquois formed the second great obstacle to their acceptance of the Faith, and by superstition we mean dreams, sorcery, and sacrifices to Areskoui. Father Garheil in the Cayuga country calls dreams the soul of their religion,¹⁵ and Father Milet among the Onondagas refers to dreams as "this country's sole divinity, to which they defer in all

¹³ Ibid., LVII, 127

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., LIV, 65.

things."¹⁶ Father Brayas in the Oneida canton considered that his obstacles^{18.}
were — "drunkenness, impurity, and dreams." Of these, dreams he called the
most dangerous evil, and "as the oldest, it is very hard to cure."¹⁷

There is no doubt at all that the Jesuits could see no good in the
Indians' practice of obeying dreams. Just what were these evil practices that
were so damnable? From early youth the Indian boy and girl were encouraged to
dream of some stag or bear or fish that the hunters or fishermen would make a
successful catch. At the age of ten or twelve, young boys painted their faces
black, and were forced to fast for several days in order that they might, "with
their head empty" have more fruitful dreams.¹⁸ The boy's father, or some
elder, or those whom the missionaries referred to as jongleurs, would question
the lad very seriously about what he dreamed. That which he dreamt of was
to be his divinity, his manitou, his guardian angel, as it were, — be it
thunder or the sun or a favorite deerskin or bearskin. These things are
regarded as "remedies to which God has attached the good fortune of a long
life," and in fact, "they take marvelous pains to preserve these things, with
this in view, and when they are ill, they cover themselves with these, or put
them near at hand, as a defense against attacks of the disease."¹⁹ Dreams
were indulged in and believed and obeyed not just once during life but
constantly, before fishing or hunting expeditions and always before war.

¹⁶Ibid., LII, 153.

¹⁷Ibid., LI, 125.

¹⁸Ibid., LIV, 141.

¹⁹Ibid., 67.

19.

If they had some "vision", they would conquer, or should they fall into the hands of the foe they would escape. Dreams were to be obeyed, and such deference was paid to them that everything that a dreamer asked for had to be given to him or else his enmity and the wrath of all his clan would be laid at your door. Father Le Moyne tells us that "the people glory in committing a thousand extravagances for the sake of obeying this god of darkness and falsehood," and he records several instances.²⁰

The missionaries, perhaps magnified this obstacle beyond its actual strength. In many religions, and even in the Old and New Covenant of the Judaic-Christian tradition, we find God revealing Himself in dreams, especially to prophets and holy people. In the Gospels we have St. Joseph informed in a dream by "the angel of the Lord" that he should take Mary to himself since it was "by the power of the Holy Spirit that she conceived this child;" in other dreams he was told that he should "take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt", and later that he should "return to the land of Israel."²¹ Father Carheil is the exception when he inclines somewhat toward a benign interpretation of the practice of belief in dreams. "When they speak of dreams as of a god, they mean nothing else than that it is by this means that they gain knowledge of the will of God, and of what is needful for the preservation of their lives..."²² Most of the missionaries among the Iroquois were swayed to

²⁰Ibid., XLVII, 179-185.

²¹Matt. I, 20; II, 13; II, 20.

²²Jesuit Relations, LIV, 65.

evaluate the practice of dreams as diabolical because of the evident abuses, and perhaps because of the inconveniences suffered as a result. When a missionary bore down on the practice he "daily received new insults from those who will not be converted, and an elder reproached him publicly with destroying their country because he destroyed their dreams...; and at the same time he threatened that if Father did not leave the village where he then was he would have him expelled from the entire country."²³ The subject matter of the dreams often confirmed the missionaries in their belief that they were from the devil, as for instance the old man who dreamed of the Christian heaven and there saw Iroquois Indians treated as captives, with their fingers and noses cut off. The lesson of this parable was not lost on the Iroquois audience.²⁴ Baptism was withheld from the majority of Indians, "through the reasonable fear lest there should be in the dreams something diabolical."²⁵ A concrete example of this mentality was the interpretation of a missionary to the Mohawks on the erection of a wooden cross in the middle of the village, the obedience to a dream. The evaluation of the dream by this missionary was that "the kingdom of Satan was about to be destroyed even by himself."²⁶ Perhaps folly would have been a better critique of such a belief in dreams rather than commerce with the devil.

However, the real danger in the overcredulity in what was received in

²³Ibid., LVIII, 177.

²⁴Ibid., LII, 155.

²⁵Ibid., LII, 229.

²⁶Ibid., LIII, 163.

dreams was the fact that the official interpreters were the Jongleurs, the village sorcerers, the medicine men, and these often enough were impostors. Father Jean de Lamberville witnessed one such fake cut the temples of a sick girl, suck at the wound, and spit out of his mouth the evil spirits of the girl, bear's teeth... with human hair or stag's bristles which he had concealed in his mouth.²⁷ The jongleurs had as their sources of power a reputation for skill acquired from their fathers, and the credulity of the Indians. At the coming of the missionaries, the jongleurs felt their control over the people slipping and they attacked the Jesuits with all the weapons of their art. All the losses in war were charged to the presence of strangers in the village. They accused the missionaries of bringing smallpox: "they are sorcerers who effect by disease what Onnontio can not accomplish by force of arms."²⁸ The accusation most disastrous in its effects was the charge that it was Baptism that caused the deaths of Iroquois children. This report was spread widely throughout the Five Nations, and it was aided by the fact that the Fathers sought out dying babies and old folk on their death bed in order to Baptize them. It was true that most of those who were baptized died.

The last element of the Iroquois superstition was their belief in Agreskoui as "the Master of their lives." The jongleurs had influence here too since it was they who usually invoked Agreskoui at the feasts, —

²⁷ Ibid., IX, 187 - 189.

²⁸ Ibid., LVI, 61. Onnontio means "Big Mountain" in the Iroquois tongue, a fairly literal translation of Montmagny, the name of an early French governor. All French governors thereafter were known to the Iroquois as Onnontio just as the Dutch and English governors were known as Corlaer from Arent van Curler, whom the Dutch sent among them as an envoy.

especially at those eat-all feasts which were so often commanded in dreams, or at least so interpreted by the jongleurs. Before eating, the food was offered to this god. For success in hunting and in war tobacco was offered to him. You might guess what the French missionaries' opinion of Agreskoui was: "a demon, who desired nothing better than to make us the companions of his misery in Hell."²⁹

It was the missionaries' fondest hope to establish Christianity on the ruins of this "Idolatry". From the meagre data available on the god, Agreskoui, it perhaps could have been possible to look on him as St. Paul once did upon the unknown god of the Athenians. Perhaps they could have divested the notion of any personification of the sun or sky that it sometimes had, and clothed it with the vesture of the Christian God. Instead of trying to substitute the grace before meals to the French Dieu, which they actually attempted, perhaps they could have kept the invocation to Agreskoui, this time an Agreskoui "the creator of heaven and earth, the God about whom I have come to bring you the good news." Instead their efforts were to discredit "the false divinities, — namely dreams, and Agreskoui, — in order to establish the truth on the ruins of falsehood and fable."³⁰ With hindsight, with the anthropological knowledge that all primitive tribes have had some form of primitive revelation, some idea of one supreme god,³¹ with the great

²⁹Ibid., LVII, 97.

³⁰Ibid., LIII, 265 - 267.

³¹Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D., Primitive Revelation, trans. Joseph J. Baierl (St. Louis, Missouri, 1939), pp. 167 - 261.

advance in missiology and the practice of missionary adaptation, we can now say that perhaps the early missionaries in New France might better have accepted the belief in Agreskoui as an expression of religious sentiment found in all nations and races. A Mohawk voiced the following significant complaint to a missionary: "My brother, ... thou askest things of which it is very hard for us to grant thee. For, in short, is it not very difficult to break off all at once with the habits in which we have been brought up, to abandon absolutely things of which we have been in possession since the beginning of the world?"³²

The mentality of the French missionaries of that time was to be somewhat sceptical of the virtue of religion being practiced by anyone before Baptism by water. The presumption was against the probability that these dirty, slovenly, uncultured Iroquois barbarians had any true intercourse with God. So, if perchance the obstacle of superstition was not so great when the missionaries came upon the Iroquois, at least the problem was very real to them. To them Agreskoui was really "a slave, whom God, who is the Master of our lives, keeps chained in Hell as a proud and wicked spirit,"³³ and the jongleurs were "thorough impostors", and in dreams "the demons of Hell —tyrants, and enemies of their salvation spoke to them..."³⁴ Some Jesuits considered this their major obstacle, for "marriage may serve as a curb on lewdness" but there was none for superstitions. "As they advance in years, they become more attached

³² Jesuit Relations, LIII, 235.

³³ Ibid., 225.

³⁴ Ibid., 279.

to them and the old people are more subject to them than the young ones; and through this they gain credit by saying the sun or the thunder or some other false divinity has said this or that to them.³⁵

In addition to savagery and superstition, intemperance hindered those who would set up the Church among the Iroquois. There was no doubt as to what material object, brought to the Indian by the white man, was most prejudicial to the spread of the Faith; it was liquor, firewater. It is a biological fact that alcohol has more intoxicating effects on some people than on others. The people of the Mediterranean lands have comparatively little trouble with it but at the other end of the pendulum swing we find the North American Indians. Even among civilized people today, the concept of the purpose of alcohol as a means towards good fellowship and sociability, is often lacking. This notion was altogether lost on the Iroquois of the time of our study since to him the purpose of firewater was intoxication. Long patient education would be needed to shew these "children of the forest" that urbanity was a virtue, and that intoxication was a gross vice. Since the Indian was regarded as a minor no lawsuit could be brought against him in New France. In no field did the Indian seem more like a child than in the matter of drink, a fact that was seen early by those that had eyes to see. Father Le Jeune observed "both men and women experiencing a singular pleasure, not in drinking, but in becoming drunk, glorying in this and making others so".³⁶

In a memorial to the French Court Father Lafitau describes their drunken

³⁵Ibid., LVIII, 275.

³⁶Ibid., IX, 205.

fury: "When these people are intoxicated they become so furious that they break and smash everything in their houses; they utter horrible yells and shouts and like madmen, seek their enemies to stab them."³⁷ Father Jean Delanglez, S.J., a scholar who has done exhaustive study on this subject, points out that "among the redmen there was no idea of moderate drinking, nor imbibing for any other reason except complete, bestial intoxication. The gleam of lust for firewater came to the eyes of an Indian at the mere sight of a liquor container, and almost instinctively the Indian went for the alcoholic contents much as an animal goes for its prey."³⁸ Samuel Champlain in 1636 strictly forbade any traffic with the Indians in intoxicating liquors and there was a fine of fifty livres for getting an Indian drunk. Other government officials who succeeded him were not so clear-sighted and were not so free of the influence of the merchants.

Where did the Iroquois get the liquor. The Iroquois were in a more advantageous (or disadvantageous) position than other Indians for acquiring liquor. They could tap both Albany and Quebec. At one time we find sixty kegs of brandy among the Oneidas; at another we find Iroquois traders returning with forty kegs from the nearby Dutch. Father Le Moyne speaks of such quantities brought from New Holland as to make a "veritable Pot-house of Onondaga."³⁹ When the English gained control of New York there was no let up

³⁷ Ibid., LXVII, 39.

³⁸ Jean Delanglez, S.J., Frontenac and the Jesuits (Chicago, 1939), p.70.

³⁹ Jesuit Relations, LIII, 241, 257; XLVII, 185.

in the flow of liquor. When Governor de Denonville of Quebec criticized Governor Dongan of New York for this policy, Dongan justified himself with the remark: "Our rum does as little hurt as your brandy..." and "to prohibit them all strong liquors seems a little hard and very Turkish."⁴⁰

Despite the 1636 ban on the sale of liquor to the Indian and the royal ordinance against it in 1657, the exchange of brandy for fur continued. The Court in France when informed of the abuses several times urged governors and intendants to crush the traffic, but all efforts were balked by the commercial interests and the fur traders. There were big profits in the sale of brandy and the abuses could be winked at by French colonial officials. Bishop Laval studied the situation and finally on May 5, 1659 declared an excommunication reserved to himself to be incurred ipso facto by all who provided the Indian with either wine or brandy. At that juncture Governor de Mesy broke with Laval and became more tolerant of the commerce. The Intendant Talon "gradually changed his mind with regard to the brandy trade, becoming more affected by the specious arguments and immediate advantages of the traffic, and less bothered by the moral evils flowing from it."⁴¹ Excommunication was considered "an encroachment on civil power." When Frontenac reached Canada in 1672, this reserved censure irritated him, and he saw in it

⁴⁰Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany, 1853 - 1887), III, 463.

⁴¹Delanglez, p. 95.

merely a manoeuvre of the Jesuits for power. It has been truly said that "no other conflict of opinion and policy aroused as much fire in Canada during the second half of the 17th century as the one hinging on brandy."⁴² Talon even went so far as to request other priests from France: "Send four good religious who do not constrain nor torment consciences," presumably on the matter of the reserved case.⁴³ The choice fell on the Recollects who for 40 years had been longing to return to the former field of their missionary labors. "They were heralded in Quebec by the civil authorities... as chosen opponents of the bishop, his clergy, and the Jesuits."⁴⁴

Meanwhile abuses and excesses were continuing and increasing. The Sovereign Council at Quebec, paradoxically enough, permitted traders to sell liquor to the Indians while forbidding the latter to get drunk. The effects of the sale of brandy to the Iroquois were the same as to all the Indians. It was above every other consideration a hindrance to the Faith. Father Millet pointed out that "in their sober moments they show an interest in the Faith,"⁴⁵ but evidently their sober moments were few. Among the Ojibwas, some progress was made in the elimination of superstition and the lessening of divorce but drunkenness negated all that had been accomplished! An old missionary made the observation that "all who know the savages admit

⁴²Ibid., p. 69.

⁴³Delanglez, p. 100 citing "Correspondence of Talon", Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Quebec pour 1930-1931, (Quebec, 1931) p. 100.

⁴⁴Delanglez, p. 100.

⁴⁵Jesuit Relations, LIV, 49.

that an angel can be made from a barbarian if intoxicating liquor be kept from him.⁴⁶ Father Jean de Lamberville calls drunkenness "the curse of the Iroquois."⁴⁷ In two months time he records seven murders committed by drunkards. Such was not the environment for teaching the Faith.

Often enough the lives of the missionaries were endangered by the frenzied orgies of the Iroquois. "It is as if all the people in the village have gone insane;"⁴⁸ "drink renders them demons,"⁴⁹ and "often makes the villages veritable images of hell."⁵⁰ The Jesuits had firebrands hurled at their heads, chapels broken into where they had taken refuge, and their lives plotted against over brandy.⁵¹ Father Carheil was driven from the Cayuga canton "because of the fury of the drunkards there."⁵² One Jesuit superior, writing of the disturbances caused the infant Church by the widespread intoxication, wrote: "My ink is not black enough to depict them in their true colors; it would require dragon's gall to express here the bitterness which we have experienced therefrom."⁵³

Even from a natural viewpoint brandy was a great evil for the Indians. It impoverished them. Hunters returning from the chase laden with beaver

⁴⁶Ibid., II, 267-269.

⁴⁷Ibid., LXII, 65 - 67.

⁴⁸Ibid., II, 217.

⁴⁹Ibid., 123.

⁵⁰Ibid., LXII, 223.

⁵¹Ibid., II, 219; LVI, 63; LIX, 245; LXI, 159; LVI, 61.

⁵²Ibid., LXII, 99.

⁵³Ibid., XLVIII, 63.

skins instead of furnishing their families with provisions, clothing, and other necessary supplies, drank away all their earnings in a short time. Physical injury was often the result of their drinking. "Every night is filled with clamors, brawls, and fatal accidents, which the intoxicated cause in the cabins. Everything is permitted them for they give as an excuse that they were bereft of reason at the time."⁵⁴ In fact, those who had grievances against another pretended to get intoxicated in order to take vengeance with impunity. This obstacle of intemperance greatly hindered the missionaries in teaching the Catholic Faith and in encouraging the practice of Christian morals. This weakness in the Indian often proved a roadblock to further advance in the Christian life once they had been received into the Church.

Idleness, impurity, polygamy, lewdness, form another aspect of the problem of setting up the Church among the Iroquois. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall be called the children of God." Father Bruyas writes to his superior in Quebec from one of the Iroquois cantons: "you can see, my Reverend Father, what prevents the Faith from triumphing in this country; it is these three great enemies of Jesus Christ, of whom St. John speaks — concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae. The demon is the creator of the dream; drunkenness may pass for the world, for among these people to be drunk is to be valiant; and do not the disorders arising from

⁵⁴Ibid., XLVI, 103 - 105.

impurity express perfectly the third enemy of mankind?"⁵⁵

The chief forms that this vice took were polygamy, conjugal infidelity and divorce. Under the influence of liquor other debaucheries were committed; with the removal of drink "one removes a thousand sins of impurity of which they had no knowledge before the introduction of liquor."⁵⁶ Polygamy was practiced for the most part by the chiefs and leading warriors, and they resented being told that it was an immoral practice. Father Bruyas related how a drunken Iroquois went searching for the blackrobe shouting: "I will kill him; he is a demon who forbids us to have several wives."⁵⁷ As regards conjugal fidelity in the Iroquois cantons, this same missionary found but one neophyte who had in his three years of married life kept his conjugal faith with his wife. As for divorce, marriages could be broken up with ease, merely by one party leaving the other. The proscription of divorce made Christianity undesirable to some Indian women because, they reasoned, "there will be no more marriages for them if they become Christians; because then they can not take another husband when they have left a bad one."⁵⁸ This looseness of the marriage bond was the Indian's greatest sin in Father Bruyas's estimation and on account of this vice he expected "to sustain some severe battles."⁵⁹ His policy was not to admit converts already married until they had a longer probation to test the

⁵⁵ Ibid., LI, 127 - 129.

⁵⁶ Ibid., LXIII, 201.

⁵⁷ Ibid., LI, 125.

⁵⁸ Ibid., XLII, 147.

⁵⁹ Ibid., LI, 127.

strength of their marriage bond. There was ever present the prudent fear of making more apostates than Christians.

We have listed the major obstacles to the Christianizing of the Iroquois: savage culture, superstition, intemperance and licentiousness, but there were other obstacles, perhaps not so formidable, but of such magnitude as to make difficult the instruction of the Iroquois. These difficulties are of two types, natural difficulties which are encountered and overcome in every mission territory, and the circumstantial difficulties, peculiar to the geographic and temporal situation of the Iroquois. The three natural difficulties were: language, the hardship of the Indian way of life, and the tenacity of the native to his own traditions, his old way of doing things. The three circumstantial difficulties were: the fur trade, the proximity of the Dutch, and later the English, and the Iroquois hostility towards the French. Just a word about each, before pointing out the missionary strategy in attacking the many pronged problem.

For a missionary, knowledge of the language of his people is essential. "What can a man do who does not understand their language, and who is not understood when he speaks?" was the complaint made by Father Bruyas during his first stammerings.⁶⁰ Knowledge of the native tongue was required both to know the people and to communicate ideas. Among the Iroquois there was no written literature that one could study to learn the language, as well as the culture and mores of the people— as among the Chinese;— here both language

⁶⁰ Ibid., 131.

and culture had to be acquired the hard way, in the smoky long houses of the Iroquois. Was the language difficult? The Rev. Megapolensis, the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Fort Orange (Albany) wagered that the Mohawks must change their language every two or three years, so incomprehensible was it.⁶¹

The hardships to which the Indian had grown accustomed could be a great trial to a European missionary, to live in an Iroquois cabin, -- with the smoke, the stench of the oiled hair, the insipid food "which would be refused by the dogs of France", the lack of privacy, the lack of protection from the cold, the insolence and raillery of those "for whose sake the missionary is in this Purgatory." As the veteran missionary, and later martyr, Father Brebeuf once put it in instructions to his own future missionary brethren, "all the fine qualities which make you loved and respected in France are like pearls trampled under the feet of swine, or rather of mules, which utterly despise you when they see that you are not as good pack animals as they are."⁶² To be sure, life in an Iroquois canton was different from "meditating in one's oratory."

To language, and hardships, we add that difficulty which finds its roots in the fact that social pressure has much influence in the decisions and actions of primitive people. What the French Jesuits called human respect, the quality that hindered the Indian from renouncing his superstitious practices was often enough a love of their kith and kin and the

⁶¹Megapolensis, p. 168.

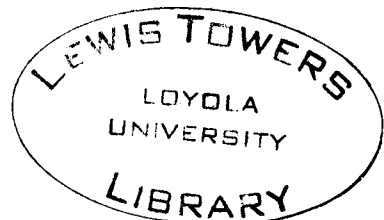
⁶²Jesuit Relations, XII, 123.

ancient tradition which they held sacred, mingled perhaps with a baser fear of ridicule from their own people. Persecution by the relatives of neophytes caused many a relapse into paganism.

The first of the circumstantial difficulties stems from the natural inclination of the Iroquois to hunt for food. When the European came to the New World, a demand was raised for the skin of the beaver, and this necessitated longer days away from the home canton and many more days on the hunt. It was realized early that only meagre results could be achieved by the missionaries in contact with the Indians at the French posts during the annual trading "meets". It is true that the Iroquois were not as nomadic as the Algonquins, but still something would have to be done to inculcate more sedentary habits if permanent instruction were to be hoped for. At any attempt on the part of the Jesuits to induce the Indian to farm instead of spending all his time on the fur trade, just as in the efforts of the Jesuits to prohibit brandy to the Indian, the grasping commercial monopoly "which controlled the fortunes of New France, and was merely 'working' the colony for financial gains, saw in the Jesuit an enemy, and often placed serious obstacles in his path."⁶³

Another circumstantial factor that caused some hindrance to the apostolic activity of the Jesuits was the close proximity of the Dutch at Fort Orange with whom the Iroquois, especially the Mohawk, constantly

⁶³Ibid., I, 19.



traded. The Dutch, followers of Calvin, were indifferent to the religious sentiments of the Iroquois. At first they tried to convert them, but they had a sad experience with one who stayed in New Amsterdam two full years and could read and write Dutch and answer the prayers in church. He took to "drinking brandy; he pawned his Bible and became a real beast, who is doing more harm than good among the Indians."⁶⁴ All the Dutch desired was that they be unmolested; no longer was there any question of converting the heathen. But they found it difficult to mask their detestation for the sign of the cross and the rosaries that hung from the necks of the Iroquois Christians who came to trade. It was hard for the missionary to explain that all Christians do not agree on the correct way that God should be worshipped, that at the time of the Protestant Revolt many broke away from the Catholic Church. In time the difficulty stemming from the residents at Albany loomed very large — more firearms and whiskey for the Iroquois, more anti-French instigation.

This brings us to the final circumstantial difficulty, somewhat related to that just treated, — the traditional hostility of the Iroquois to the French. In the fifth chapter of this study the causes of this hostility, its nature, and its disastrous effects on Catholic mission activity, among the Iroquois will be treated in relation to the apostolate of the French Jesuit missionaries among the Iroquois. Eventually this became the most formidable obstacle and, as we shall see later, the explanation why the plan adopted was only partially successful.

⁶⁴New York Colonial Documents, III, 106.

Let us review what we have already considered. The purpose of mission activity has been pointed out as the setting up of the Church in a territory where it has not yet taken root. When this purpose is applied to the Iroquois apostolate we face a problem, a many pronged problem, — the various obstacles to the spread of the Faith among the Five Nations. Now we shall indicate the solution proposed by the Jesuit missionaries to this problem and in the following chapters we shall trace their varying degrees of success in implementing the plan.

Where was the solution to this missionary problem to be found? The superior of the missions in New France held the position of policy-maker, but since the Jesuits were a missionary order, he could draw on the vast experience of his brethren in other mission fields. The curia of the Jesuit Father General in Rome was a common pool of information on missionary technique and methods. From this clearing house of ideas came the world-wide Jesuit policy, for instance, of always learning the language of the native people among whom missionaries were laboring. Thence also came the warning to protect the native population from the exploitation of the white colonizers. From the very beginning the Jesuit missionaries took the part of shield for the natives, —in Portuguese America it was against the sugar planters, in Spanish America against the miners, in French America against the brandy peddlers.⁶⁵ Another typical Jesuit missionary technique was the reduction, whose

⁶⁵J. F. Bannon, S.J., "Blackrobes in the Americas", Historical Bulletin, XVIII (March 1940), 66.

prototype was the famous Paraguay Reductions.

Father La Jume was the Jesuit mission superior in the formative years of the Canadian mission. He placed emphasis, of course, on learning the language, spending six miserable months himself on the hunt with the Montagnais Indians to do so. His plan in 1637 was substantially that followed by his Jesuit successor 30 years later when St. Francis Mission Colony was begun. The plan was two-fold: missionaries to be sent out to live with the more sedentary Indians with whom the French had dealings (at that time the Hurons), and reductions to be set up for the nomadic Algonquin tribes, especially the Montagnais and Abenaki. Sillery reduction was opened in 1637 after Fathers Brebeuf, Daniel, and Davost had already been sent to the Hurons. Thus thirty years later, the same policy prevailed, though great changes had taken place in the meantime. The twofold plan — men to the Iroquois cantons and a reduction for the Iroquois — was accepted as the solution to the many sided problem. The reduction, which was perhaps the major facet of the plan, was to provide a healthy Christian environment under the direction and watchful eye of the Jesuit Fathers, so that, surrounded by all the helps of their religion, Iroquois converts could live a settled and orderly existence, secluded from the taunts and persecutions of their pagan relatives, and edified by the industry and piety of the neighboring French settlers. For the success of this phase of the plan, missionaries had to be active in the Iroquois cantons, at least to recruit new members for the reduction. Priests had to be sent to work among the Iroquois where they lived, and in the very midst of the obstacles, that the Gospel might be preached to all and that the good news might be heralded to

those Iroquois who had never heard of Jesus Christ. Chapels had to be erected and divine worship offered in the very midst of the pagan Iroquois. By the very presence of the Church in the territory Grace was to be brought to work. Priests were to be in the cantons to make converts, to provide the Sacraments. They were to be on hand to baptize the dying, --the task that became their chief care when, due to the hostility of the tribe, all other work was useless or impossible. These men brought much glory to God by working patiently in a thankless environment. By 1679, Father Dablon could make the statement, that the Gospel was then so widely preached that it would be difficult to find an Iroquois who had not "a sufficient knowledge of our mysteries to be baptized whenever God should be pleased to touch his heart and grant him the desire for it."⁶⁶ It was not until 1668 that a Jesuit mission was in operation in each of the Five Nations. The preceding fifteen years had witnessed sporadic attempts to place missionaries in the cantons, but these efforts were hindered by intermittent upsurges of Iroquois hostility.

The purpose of this study is to show how the St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony for the Iroquois was a partial solution to the problem. Chapter III deals with the embryonic stages of the reduction. Chapter IV witnesses its maturity, examines the reduction in some of its finest years, while at the second and third sites of the mission. The fifth chapter dwells on the growth

⁶⁶Jesuit Relations, LXI, 235-237.

of the biggest obstacle to the Iroquois apostolate, English opposition and Iroquois hostility, which obstacle cut off work in the cantons. The final chapter will evaluate the success of the reduction in doing its share in solving the missionary problem. The solution was only a partial one, and the credits and blame will be placed where they belong.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN UNFOLDS: A REDUCTION AT KENTAKE¹

This chapter will sketch the important first years at St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony, the formative years of the reduction, from 1667 to 1676. In 1667 the chapel was built and 1676 is the year of the first of the changes in the site of the mission. The gradual and somewhat impeded evolution of the reduction will be brought out. But first, by way of comparison and contrast, to clarify our idea of Xavier Mission Colony, let us first glance at three other similar projects, begun earlier in the mission history of New France.

Let us travel to Sillery, a few miles east of Quebec. In 1638 Noel Brulart de Sillery, a noble at the Court of Louis XIII, under the inspiration of Monsieur Vincent de Paul and motivated by love of Our Lady, donated an initial twenty thousand livres to found the mission colony which bears his name. The project was conceived by Father Le Jeune who recognized the need for a reduction for the nomadic Algonquin tribes, in order to train them in agricultural life, to provide protection from Iroquois raids, and ^{to} instill in the Indians the Christian notion of how to live. At Sillery, four miles below Quebec, the mission began with two Algonquin families. The fertile mind of the Jesuit founder had hopes of domesticating the elk "to till the soil and draw sledges over the snow in the winter."¹ This mission colony came upon hard times

¹Ibid., IX, 165.

in 1646 the nuns transferred their little hospital to Quebec; a few years later the Church and mission house burnt. Disease spread throughout the encampment, the thin soil became exhausted, and the Iroquois were making their hit and run attacks. In later years, after the mission site had been changed to the falls of the Chaudiere River, Fathers Vincent and Jacques Bigot managed a flourishing colony, now overwhelmingly composed of Abenaki fleeing from the inroads of the British in Maine. At the time of our study however, Sillery mission was in a far from flourishing condition, the Algonquins not trusting the palisades as a safe enough shield from Iroquois raids.

When Sillery was begun, Father Brebeuf was leading a group of fellow missionaries among the Hurons in the area between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay of Lake Huron. Father Brebeuf's plan was to be with the Indians at all times, in their villages, in their cabins, on the hunt. It was Father Lalemant, the successor of Father Brebeuf as superior of the Huron Mission in 1639, who conceived the residence of Ste. Marie. Ste. Marie was the central headquarters from which the dependent mission stations were supplied. Centrally located, it served as retreat house where the Fathers could conduct their annual Spiritual Exercises, and as villa house where the French priests could gather for a time to speak their own language, a place for consultation where the experience in solving language problems could be pooled and other missionary techniques could be shared. Secondly, there were some expectations that this residence would be the nucleus of a reduction: "we even hope that it may serve as a retreat to the poor Christian Savages, who, --feeling themselves carried away by a torrent of debaucheries, and by the barbarous and infernal customs of their country, while dwelling in their own villages,-- will have a means of escaping shipwreck by taking refuge near us; some of them"

already done so, and we shall willingly welcome as neighbors entire families who may wish to approach us, some of whom have given us their word."² But the Jesuit superior did not count on the Iroquois who, indeed, made shipwreck of all his plans. In 1649 there was in operation at Ste. Marie a hospital for the Hurons, a cemetery for the Christian Indians, a Church where as formerly there had only been a chapel, and a hostel for Indian pilgrims and pagan visitors. The dispersal of the Hurons and the intentional destruction of the old mission compound by the Jesuits lest it fall into the hands of the Iroquois precluded any possibility of our making a final judgment on the value of the Ste. Marie type institution. It is significant though, that Xavier Mission Colony for the Iroquois had its beginning as a reduction in the same fashion,—its first purpose being a residence for retreats, and a place of rest for those missionaries worn out in the field.

Lorette Mission Colony for the dispersed Hurons is a third mission colony, the one after which Xavier was closely modelled. Four hundred of the dispersed Hurons were led down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers by the remaining two Jesuits who were not martyred. Until 1656 they settled on the Isle d'Orleans near Quebec where a Church and fort were constructed for them. Great alarm was created in that year by a Mohawk attack in which one hundred were captured or slain. Overtures of peace were made in the following year, and the Mohawks adopted the Bear family, and the Onondagas the Rock family. The Cord family elected to stay with the French, and under the direction of Father Chaumonot these Indians formed the nucleus of a mission colony at

²Ibid., XII, 141.

various sites until finally located at Lorette in 1673. During the years with Father Chamonot the Hurons became "models of piety." We are told that there was no drunkenness, no theft, no practice of superstition, no divorces, no luxury of fine clothes, no superfluous expenses at feasts, and what is to be noted, they were said to have been much more modest than the French.³ This was a true reduction, and in 1670 Xavier Mission Colony was likened to it by the superior of the Canadian missions who had visited both colonies, which by 1675, as we are told numbered three hundred persons, all Christians. At this reduction two means were used successfully and later adopted by the Xavier Mission Colony, --devotion to the Holy Family and a judicious use of catechists.⁴

It has been pointed out that St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony backed into its role as a reduction rather than being originally designated for that purpose. The land had been acquired from Sieur de Lauzon in 1647, a royal councillor in the Parliament of Bordeaux.⁵ It was situated on the southern bank of the St. Lawrence River opposite Montreal, "on an elevated plain, commonly called Laprairie de la Magdalene, which is watered by the various

³Ibid., LVII, 65-71.

⁴The chapel at Lorette was the exact replica of the Holy House of Loretto in Italy. Many devout French people from Quebec exhibited their devotion to the Holy Family by pilgrimages to this chapel.

⁵E.J.Devine, S.J., Historie Caughnawaga (Montreal, 1922), p. 13 citing Registre d'Intendance, Nos. 2-9, folio 125. In 1667, the year of the beginning of St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony, one quarter of all the French settlers lived on ecclesiastical seigniories. This was one of the ways that the Crown determined upon to support religion.

windings of the little river of great beauty and abounding in all kinds of fish."⁶ The founder of the Xavier Mission Colony was Father Raffeix, who came to New France in 1663. Because of hostilities among the Cayugas his departure for that mission had to be deferred. In 1667 he was assigned to the post of pastor of several French families at Laprairie; an added duty was the maintenance of a small residence and chapel that was built there in that year as a place of rest for "our missionaries, — both those of the Iroquois country and those among the Upper Algonquins, called Outaouaks (Ottawa), — and to furnish them more easily the things needful for their maintenance."⁷ Annually every Jesuit has the obligation and the privilege of devoting eight days to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and for this task a quiet place away from one's ordinary surroundings is desirable; hence the choice of Laprairie, on the outposts of the territory settled by the French colonists. Father Raffeix, on seeing this location conceived the possibility of some sort of refuge for Indian converts who were afraid of being corrupted by the bad example and influence of their pagan countrymen, — some place where perhaps they could be free from the temptation of the whiteman's liquor. The example of Father Chaumonot was before his eyes and he had already read about the wonders of Paraguay. In the winter of 1667-1668 he instructed a group of Oneida Indians for whom the visible grace that attracted them to stay among the

⁶ Jesuit Relations, LV, 33.

⁷ Ibid.

French was the sacred ceremonies in the Church in Montreal.⁸

The following summer Father Raffeix brought them to Father Chaumonot at work among the Hurons and it was this experienced missionary who gave them the final instructions for Baptism. This select group of twelve was led by Tonschoten, an Oneida Christian and his wife Gandeakteus, who were to have the credit of being the first neophytes at the mission colony. From now on Laprairie will be referred to by its Indian name, Kentake¹, which means "at the prairie". Bishop Laval baptized those who had not yet received the Sacrament, and Gandeakteus was given the name Catherine. In the autumn of 1668 they returned to Kentake¹ where they dwelt in a rude cabin built for them by the French. During that winter they did not stray far from the mission while on the hunt, and they made it a point to return to the colony for all the big feast days, -- everyone being present at Christmas. Meanwhile Father Raffeix had "caused the land to be prepared" for his new Indian family, and when they returned in the spring of 1669 he marked out the fields for planting. Tonschoten built the first cabin, "the mother, as it were, of sixty others", which were to follow in the next seven years. The good name of the mission spread through the woods and forests down to the Iroquois cantons. Indians, drawn by curiosity, liked what they saw, and decided to join the settlement of the Indians that pray, decided to live at the "praying castle". "Some came as agents of the demon, to corrupt the others; and yet they all find themselves caught in the net of the Gospel, -- little by little, cabin by cabin, and man

⁸Ibid., LXXIII, 153.

by man."⁹

What attracted the Iroquois to the new mission colony at Kentake? Perhaps natural motives at first predominated: fine soil ("seeing the corn very fine they resolved to remain there"), good prospects for fishing and hunting, and a ready market in Montreal for beaver. We must not underestimate the spiritual motives, however, considering that these Iroquois were still in the first fervor of their religious conversion. At home in the cantons they would have had to face the anger of their pagan relatives while at Kentake they would find the practice of their newborn Faith easy. Many Christians came because they sincerely wanted to lead a life according to the law of Christ, as an Onondaga Indian who resolved to pass her life "where she could better keep up her devotion than in her own country where intemperance and other bad conduct are more prevalent than are the maxims of our religion."¹⁰ In 1670 there were already 20 families at the mission colony when Father Raffeix was instructed to lead a community of white settlers to Kentake: the white settlers came, but more numerous were the Iroquois, -- "God was inviting some savages to come to this place."¹¹

Gradually the mission colony was taking on the aspects of a reduction, a settlement where an integrated Christian life could be led in a favorable environment. This was an answer to the problem in which each obstacle was not

⁹Ibid., 159.

¹⁰Ibid., LVII, 141.

¹¹Ibid., LXIII, 151.

attacked individually but all were undermined simultaneously. Occasionally in the narrative ahead we will point out how a certain practice at the reduction was calculated to counterattack or root out some particular obstacle to the Faith, but on the whole, the solution of the problem was a fervent Christian Church among the Iroquois, the very purpose of mission activity.

In 1670 more regular practices were adopted besides the daily prayers they had observed in the woods during that first year. Daily Mass in the rude chapel, and morning and evening prayers in common were added, and Father Pierson, a young newly ordained Jesuit was sent to aid Father Raffeix in his care of the Indians. In this year also, the construction of a new Chapel, large enough for all, both French and Indian, was completed.

The governor of New France at this time was de Courcelles, a man who was deeply interested in the project of enticing more and more Iroquois under the influence of the French. At his request Father Jacques Fremin, "one of the ablest and most saintly of our missionaries", was recalled from among the Senecas to replace Father Raffeix as superior of the Xavier Mission Colony.¹² Father Fremin was to be in charge of this mission for eleven years and can rightly be called, its "second founder". After the energetic spade work of Father Raffeix, the job of Father Fremin was to place the reduction on a solid footing and to prevent any serious defections of his baptized Iroquois.

Father Fremin's first objective was to impress on the Indians the reason for their presence at Kentake¹, -- to live Christian lives. He arranged for the

¹²~~Ibid.~~, LIX, 81.

election of two captains, one for civil policies, the other to superintend the observances of Christian practices. These elected captains assembled all the people and declared that a triple pledge was required to be admitted to the village; "they must resolve to abstain from three things: "the idolatry of dreams, the changing of wives, and drunkenness."¹³ The punishment for a relapse was expulsion if the crime were flagrant. To make the new way of life more vivid, Father Fremin had two trees planted at the entrance to the mission colony; "to the one they attached drunkenness, to the other, impurity -- both subjugated by the Faith. Among the Iroquois this saying became a proverb, 'I am off to Kentake', -- that is to say, 'I give up drink and polygamy.'¹⁴

Father Fremin saw that it was not enough to demand the resolution of his converts to abstain from the brandy of the fur traders; he had to forestall the temptation. He went to Governor Frontenac in 1672 to fight for the exclusion of a tavern that traders were trying to introduce at Kentake.¹ Frontenac, though he was convinced that brandy was the best means of promoting trade among the Indians, reluctantly granted the request because of an obligation of gratitude to Father Fremin who had supplied grain from the mission to the soldiers who were constructing a fort at Cataragui. The following year, immediate action and the united backing of the captains prevented another Frenchman from opening a tavern in the village itself, "availing himself of the ill will of Monsieur Count de Frontenac, whose feelings had altered during the past year... But the adroitness and the firmness of character of Father Fremin,

¹³Ibid., LVIII, 77.

¹⁴Ibid., LXIII, 167.

together with his zeal, checked the progress of this wretched traffic, and saved his flock from the waves of the Red Sea which was likely to swallow it up."¹⁵ The Jesuit was so alert because he realized that brandy was the root of almost all the troubles of the missionaries and responsible for the ruin of the Algonquin mission. That Kentake¹ had kept free of the curse thus far was somewhat of a miracle of providence, due to "the guardian angel of this village, who wards off all such occasions of sin; and... if he were to leave it, and liquor were to come in, there would be no more Christianity in it."¹⁶ Thus reasoned the Jesuits.

Father Dablon, on his way from the Ottawa country to take over the office of Jesuit mission superior in 1670, visited Kentake¹. There was in evidence great affection among the Indians for their pastors, and among themselves there was a good spirit of union and harmony though they represented many different nations adopted at some time into Iroquois families. This was an atmosphere conducive to piety now that the Indians would not permit residence to those who would not take the triple pledge and promise to live as they did, showing Christian hospitality, taking part in the exercises of devotion and zeal, and living a full Christian life.

How did the reduction Indian keep occupied? We find them at morning prayer at dawn, and at 5 A.M. at Mass at which hymns were sung. After the Mass the women went to work in the fields while the children went to the chapel for their Mass and catechism. We are uncertain whether the women alone did the

¹⁵Ibid., 181.

¹⁶Ibid., 83.

farm work as in the cantons or were aided by the men. It is however certain that the hunting and fishing and the fighting in time of war were the braves' tasks. Winters always found them on the hunt in bands of five or six, absent from the reduction about three or four months, during which they faithfully practiced their devotional exercises. In spring they were back at the mission colony with their women folk and children.

The fervor of the Indian converts was often attested by the French settlers and was a source of humiliation to them; for both French and Indian worshipped in the same church. The Indians were very faithful to their devotional duties, even considering it a serious offense "not to attend and offer ones prayers to God, or not to hear Mass even on a week day."¹⁷ This need not be interpreted that they had false consciences, thinking these imperfections to be mortal sins, for this is related by the Jesuit writer in their praise. Every Saturday the confessionals were crowded, and on Sundays there was a High Mass, after which the Indians listened to a fuller instruction. Every festival was celebrated by a procession. On the planting festival the seed, and at the harvest festival the first fruits were blessed. Though rosary beads were often worn around the neck, Martin Skandegornaksen went further and manifested his devotion to the Blessed Virgin by wearing his around his brow.

Instances of fervor during these early years can be readily found in the pages of the Jesuit Relations. While sorely tempted on the hunt to exchange their furs for brandy, many remained firm over a period of four or five months, only three allowing themselves to be seduced. The elders at the reduction decided that they should atone for this sin of drunkenness by making a present

¹⁷Ibid., LVI, 21-23.

to the Church. Father Fremin tells us that "matters would not have remained there, and they would have been expelled had they not been married to three of the best Christian women of the village."¹⁸ Such was the horror of drunkenness at Kentake.

The horror of impurity was not less, the sanction being expulsion. There is a story of a Christian woman of tender conscience who received a garment from a man not realizing his evil intentions. "But," we are told, "as soon as she perceived his iniquitous design, she at once brought the garment to Father Fremin and begged him to give it to some poor person. 'I shall not wear it, for I can not look at it without horror. God forbid that I should ever willingly offend him'"¹⁹

Hospitality, a virtue common enough among the Indians, was informed with grace among the Christian Iroquois at Xavier Mission Colony, and it produced marvelous results. A two year provision of corn was depleted within a year in giving a warm welcome to 800 strangers. During this time the opportunity was seized "to teach many hearts" and to instruct many in the truths of the Faith.²⁰

Fervor was again demonstrated on one occasion when the Onondaga nation sent to Kentake an embassy, "ministers of hell... sowing false reports."²¹

¹⁸ Ibid., LVIII, 253.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 81.

²¹ Ibid., LXIII, 171.

These envoys, and all those who found the life at the mission hard, argued with the neophytes insisting that they could never persevere in such a strict regime. But the Christian Iroquois, we are told, rebuked them and insisted that they were content to spend their lives in sobriety among the other Christian Iroquois and in the neighborhood of the French.

The Christian Iroquois, more and more conscious of their need of God, often made great sacrifices to attend Mass, coming great distances through the snow covered Laurentian valley in the winter to attend the midnight Mass, and later on Good Friday.²² Recorded also in the Jesuit Relations were instances of these Indian hunters adoring the cross in the woods during the season of Lent. These evidences of fervor, we are told, brought tears to the eyes of some missionaries.²³ They thought it an instance of Tertullian's dictum; the blood of martyrs was bringing forth its first fruits.

The government at Xavier Mission Colony might be termed a theocracy, with Father Fremin holding both supreme temporal and spiritual power. By 1673, the population at the reduction had grown to such a degree that the Jesuit superior thought it wise to create chiefs. The three nations best represented at the reduction were the Mohawks, the Onondagas, and a group of Hurons, possibly Christian Hurons who, as captives of the Iroquois, were adopted into their tribe, or possibly some of the dispersed Hurons. Each of the three nations was to select its own chief. "The Hurons were long in consultation; the Mohawks and Onondagas had immediately made their choice. Finally the

²²Ibid., 173.

²³Ibid., LIX, 81.

Hurons, being piqued in the contest, separated themselves and went to start another mission beyond the river."²⁴ Exactly what the nature of the misunderstanding was we are not able to ascertain, but at all events, we do know that the Hurons did separate from the Iroquois, and later in 1676 formed the nucleus of a reduction founded by the Sulpicians at the foot of Mt. Royal. Father Chauchetière says that the separation from the Hurons was painful, but later friendly relations again prevailed among the Indians because of "the same Faith and the same Gospel, and especially the union which prevails among all the missionaries."²⁵

Once again we consider the threat that liquor was to the Indians, and how at this time frequent dealings with the French fur traders caused more than one Indian to yield to drink. Yet the government policy was to "civilize" the Indian, "to make Frenchmen out of them," and Frontenas was the chief proponent of this policy. A capable leader, brilliant soldier, Frontenas had only one blind spot, and that was his suspicions of the Jesuits, reading into their every act ambition for total power in New France. In a letter to Colbert, his superior in Paris, he damns the Jesuits, using cipher in doing so that he might still openly appear to be their friend. Considering them a threat to his own power, he accused them of "thinking as much about the conversion of the beaver as of souls; for the majority of their missions are pure mockeries, and I should not think they ought to be permitted to extend themselves further until we see somewhere that there be a better

²⁴Ibid., LXIII, 81.

²⁵Ibid.

organized church of those savages."²⁶ As Father Le Jeune thought years before, Colbert at the court of the French king, and Frontenac at the governor's house in Quebec, thought that the best mission technique was that of "attracting the Indians into the society and manner of living of the French." Frontenac observes that "it appears that up till now the Jesuits have had maxims contrary to this policy..."²⁷ The fact is that the contrary policy of the Jesuits grew out of their experiences and frustrated plans. Whenever the Indian was brought into close contact with the French they were corrupted. On his arrival in New France Frontenac was astonished to note that of the Huron Indians with Father Chaumonot, just outside the city of Quebec, not one spoke French. Frontenac's conception of the best means to Christianize the Indian was to convert him into a Frenchman. An instance of this mentality is the time he informed Father Chaumonot that in setting up their reduction at Lorette he expected the Hurons "to build huts regularly with French chimneys and that little by little they adopt our customs."²⁸ It is somewhat of an anomaly that this man who was so worried about any encroachment of the spiritual power over the temporal should instruct the missionaries how they should go about saving the souls of the Indians. The Jesuits had slowly come to the conclusion after fifty years in New France that the best means to form good

²⁶New York Colonial Documents, II, 93-94.

²⁷Delanglez, p. 49 citing "Colbert to Frontenac, June 13, 1673", Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Quebec pour 1926-1927, Quebec, 1927 p. 26.

²⁸Ibid., p. 23 citing "Frontenac to Colbert, November 13, 1673, "Rapport de l'Archiviste, p. 39.

Christian Indians was to keep them isolated from all unnecessary contacts with the whiteman. George Shuster adequately expresses the feelings of the Jesuit missionaries of this time:

There was the saddening realization that the impact of European culture on the Indian was often everything the Jesuit desired it not to be. Some of the letters are filled with grimly condemnatory accounts of traders who plied the natives with brandy and seduced their women; who were motivated by zest for orgies rather than by a wish to serve their fellowmen; and who were so ruthless in commerce that association with them could not help making the Redskin even less moral than he would otherwise have been. And I fancy that nearly everyone who has latterly served his country abroad, in any of the lands with which it is now concerned, must have felt his gorge rising at the sight of the self-same spectacles. In every great enterprise, from the Crusades to the reconstruction of Korea, men of good will have carried campfollowers and carpet-baggers with them, as prisoners do ball and chain.²⁹

Especially when we think of the excesses following upon the liquor traffic do we discover an irony in the words Father Le Jeune spoke in 1636: "the savages coming little by little to admire the power, ingenuity, and morality of our French..."³⁰

However, making Frenchmen out of the Iroquois would meet with no objections from Father Fremin, were not an inseparable concomitant of that process the loss of the Iroquois to liquor. Governor Frontenac, convinced that the brandy trade was beneficial, almost indispensable to the commercial interests, refused to look on the brandy traffic as belonging to the field of morals. In 1673 he travelled to Lake Ontario and claimed that he "did not

²⁹ Shuster, p. 11.

³⁰ Jesuit Relations, II, 97.

notice anything scandalous, although a few young Indians for four days drank much brandy obtained from the English."³¹ His voice has somewhat of an insincere resonance at this point. Had he been in a village after the fur merchants had brought a goodly supply of firewater he might have seen one of the orgies which the missionaries lamented. Surely the trader who seized the pelts of the Indian wouldn't broadcast the sordid elements of the trade. Both Frontenac, and Talon before him, when denying that they had ever seen any excesses in the Indian villages, possibly told the truth, since they had not continuously lived in the Indian villages where the missionaries made their home.

The pressure behind the sale of brandy to the Indians came from the commercial interests, ever eager to capitalize on the Indian weakness, their craving for firewater. Perhaps many of these Indians would have gone to the Dutch with their skins had they been refused brandy by the French since the prices at Albany were usually more favorable. This is a matter of speculation, the missionaries maintaining that such would not be the case, insisting that the most significant factors in the loss of trade to the Dutch was "the rapacity of the brandy peddlars, or the gourmets de bois, and their protectors, the merchants and officials who profited by the trade."³²

At times officials took refuge behind hypocritical reasons in explaining their policy to the French court, as when Governor de Mery found in the

³¹ Delangles, p. 103 citing "Frontenac to Colbert, November 13, 1673", Rapport de l'Archiviste, p. 32.

³² Ibid., p. 116-117.

episcopal prohibition to sell brandy to the Indian a drawback to religion: "Having wherewith to gratify their appetite the Indians allow themselves to be catechized by Dutch ministers who instruct them in heresy... and still the Jesuit Fathers persist in their first resolve, without reflecting that prudence and even Christian charity inculcate the closing of the eyes to one evil to avoid a greater or to reap a good more important than the evil."³³ The real reason for the sale of brandy was that it was the most profitable means of exchange for the pelts, but a religious motive was thought to have some weight at court.

In 1676 when the Hurons had taken their leave of the Xavier Mission Colony, these very same Indians presented a plea to Governor Frontenac to protect them, his people, against the solicitations of the brandy peddlars lest they rob them in the spring when they return from the hunt. They foresaw themselves drinking away their winter's work in a week's time; they knew their infirmity. Governor Frontenac replied that he hoped the Hurons would be happy in Montreal, but since he was not the master of the brandy trade they themselves must be on their guard against the brandy peddlars. If they were robbed, let them see Frontenac and he would repair the injustice.³⁴ This reply reveals Frontenac pigeon-holing an embarrassing request.

Can we call the Jesuit missionaries of that era "prohibitionists"? This word would not be correct should it carry with it the overtones of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who would prohibit drink to all because a few could

³³Devine, p. 24.

³⁴Delanglez, p. 116.

not drink safely. The Jesuits, as Frenchmen, brought up on the fruit of the vine, believed in a moderate use of brandy. At the Xavier Mission Colony, Father Fremin, realizing that "nearly all were addicted to drunkenness before Baptism," made efforts to keep all liquor from the reduction. Perhaps at the period we are studying, when the brandy problem was so acute, they would hold for absolute prohibition for the Indian; but in principle they were not opposed to the moderate use of brandy, nor did the excommunication touch those who gave a moderate amount to an Indian on a long journey or in similar cases. It must be remembered that the Jesuits had more contacts with the Indians than the government officials and they knew of their deep-seated weakness which made them susceptible to intoxication. Xavier Mission Colony had a good record in regard to drink and drunkenness in its first eight years but Father Fremin was wondering how long "surrounded on all sides by the most scandalous drunkenness," they could remain, "in the midst of the fire without being burnt."³⁵

In 1674 a milestone was reached in the history of Xavier Mission Colony, and a ceremony was performed that signified that the reduction had come of age, — all the marriages "were securely established, in the manner in which they are solemnized throughout the Church."³⁶ This blessing of marriages had an effect on the people, impressing on them the sanctity of marriage. In the first twenty years of the reduction not more than twenty husbands left their wives. Another instrument in the teaching of purity and the sanctity of the

35 Jesuit Relations, LIX, 257.

³⁶ Ibid., LXIII, 185.

marriage bond was the Holy Family Confraternity to be described in the following chapter. It was in the atmosphere of the reduction that "those who sinned before their Baptism have purified their souls and that those who have been born in the village have sucked modesty with their Christian mother's milk."³⁷

The most important visitor to come to the reduction was welcomed in 1675. Whereas in the preceding year the sacrament of Matrimony was first conferred, in this year Bishop Laval made his visitation of Kentake¹ and confirmed eighty Iroquois after an enthusiastic welcome. The bishop said that he had never been so touched as "when he saw the fervor of those new Christians."³⁸ A month later Governor Perrot of Montreal, and the Intendant Duchesneau who had been so favorable to the reduction, both visited Kentake¹. In a speech he praised the Indians' zeal and "fidelity in praising God and in serving the king of France."

While a somewhat integrated Christian life was being led at Xavier Mission Colony no organized recruiting policy was organized by the superior of the colony. What did come about was strictly the result of the 'zeal in each Iroquois' heart, the result of their reasoning that an orderly Christian life was worth living and worth propagating. We can divide their methods of recruiting into the three areas where it took place, -- at home, on the hunt, and in the cantons. At home, at the reduction itself, when bands of Iroquois

³⁷ Ibid., 203.

³⁸ Ibid., IX, 147.

dropped in out of curiosity, they experienced Christian hospitality, motivated by the desire to make Christians out of strangers. More than one man, on seeing the good example of those at Kentake¹, decided to become a Christian, and returned to his own country to bring back his relatives. What impressed the prospective convert most was the law and order at the reduction — the absence of brandy and all its concomitant evils.

On the hunt, the apostolic Iroquois would meet with other bands of hunters, and at nightfall would vocably say their prayers. Influenced in this way was Kryn, the Mohawk war-chief, who left his own country and came to Kentake¹ with forty-two of his relatives. Other Indians described the reduction, while a few, Hot Ashes, the most adept, would tell picture stories of the Christian mysteries.

In the cantons proselytizers willingly flirted with danger to try and persuade their former companions in debauchery to come back with them to the reduction. An Iroquois woman, among the Hurons with Father Chamonot, wrote an eloquent appeal to her nation to embrace the Faith. Other eloquent recruiters were those who had come back for their relatives that they too might share the joy of the Lord. The Jesuits in the cantons often enough preferred to send their neophytes to the mission colony lest they be corrupted in the drunken long houses. Often the Iroquois in visiting their cantons found little success in persuading their relatives to leave their ancestral home, but they would let their apostolic zeal serve them in another capacity such as the action of the Oneida Christian who "accidentally" kicked over the bucket of brandy.

By 1673, so many Iroquois had made their home at the reduction that Xavier Mission Colony was now called an Iroquois mission, having increased

by one hundred eighty in fifteen months. It was from this time that one begins to hear the complaint among the Iroquois in the cantons, the pagan tribesmen, that "the black-gowns are intent upon making a desert out of our country."³⁹

There was a good deal of hardship entailed in pulling up stakes, leaving those you have known behind in the canton. Father Chammonot compared it to a rich person in Europe entering the religious life.⁴⁰ To go to the reduction meant to leave the old hunting grounds and to earn for yourself the anger and ridicule of your kinsfolk.

One of the obstacles that the reduction overcame was superstition, the sacrificing to Agreskoui and the obedient following of dreams. This obstacle, a subtle thing, is only conquered in time. Because of this fault in the Iroquois, the length of probation before Baptism was two or three years in the cantons. It was what can be called "the community conscience" that was the most powerful weapon in destroying this demon. Just as social pressure was a big reason for practicing these forms of superstition in the cantons, so at the reduction it helped individuals find strength enough to withstand the temptation. There follow three incidents of superstition at Kentake and how they were handled.

First there was the infidel visitor who on sitting down to eat began to sacrifice meats to the demon. All the Christians were naturally indignant and they threw the meat to the dogs. The infidel claimed that his gods were his dreams and he did not fear at all the God of heaven. At this Father Fremin retorted that he soon would feel the just anger of the All-Powerful God.

³⁹Ibid., LVII, 109.

⁴⁰Ibid., LVIII, 73.

We are told that "at the end of three months, that savage's three children, who were then in very good health, were all taken from him by death."⁴¹ Such an incident would be enough to inspire any infidel with fear, but it is a somewhat dangerous instrument for a missionary to use, -- unless he is very humble and very holy, as perhaps Father Fremin was.

Case two is of an old man who asked to live at Kentakeⁱ, and his favor was granted. Not long after that at a feast which he provided he declared to the guests that he was ill and must fulfill a dream in order to be cured. The leader of the Christians rose suddenly and shouted: "No that shall not be done, for it would be a sin. We will eat what thou hast prepared for us but only after having prayed to God."⁴² Later the leaders of the colony were obliged to drive him from the reduction because of continued attachment to dreams.

The third case concerns the effects of the dead which in the pagan cantons were either buried with the deceased or used for superstitious purposes. (This burying of ones possessions with the deceased provides some evidence for the Iroquois belief in some sort of after-life.) However, with the death of Catherine Gandeakteua at the reduction, a more Christian custom was substituted for this latter. Gandeakteua had been one of the first residents at the mission colony and we shall say more about her in a later chapter in connection with the Holy Family Confraternity. She instructed her husband that her goods be distributed to the poor and that the "ornaments of her youth" be given to the Church. They were attached to the beams above the sanctuary for all to see

⁴¹Ibid., LIX, 259.

⁴²Ibid., LVIII, 85-87.

and reflect upon.

To this reduction came a Jesuit on a visit in 1675, who recorded that he saw a mission colony in which the fervor was high and where they were very serious in punishing those who became intoxicated.⁴³ At this time there were three hundred Iroquois at the reduction.

Father Fremin saw the change of location from Kentake¹ was desirable ever since the threat to open a tavern. In the missionary's mind the French settlers and fur traders were coming too close for the good of the Indians. The Iroquois on their part were quite used to moving their villages when the soil was getting thin and yielding poorer and poorer crops of corn, when firewood in the vicinity of the long houses was getting scarce, when poor sanitary conditions made a change desirable. Besides, at Kentake¹ the lowlands by the river were found too damp for Indian corn. Possible sites were proposed and examined. Isle de Jesus was rejected because it was too accessible to the peddlars of brandy. The site finally determined upon was a place that the Indians called Kahnawake⁴⁴ upstream on the St. Lawrence River where the Portage River flows into the big river, within sight of and just east of the rapids. The grant of land was made by the Intendant Duchesneau and ratified by Louis XIV in 1680. This was not attained without some little representation at the court in France since Frontenac petitioned that the move be blocked since it was presumably against the king's policy of intercourse between Frenchman and Indian. In July 1676, Father Fremin bade farewell to Kentake¹

⁴³Ibid., IX, 145-147.

⁴⁴Kahnawake¹ has the meaning of at the rapid; Kentake¹ signifies at the prairie.

and by the end of autumn the Indians had constructed a church, sixty feet by twenty-five feet. This was the setting for a more thoroughly Christian life for the Iroquois, now somewhat isolated from the demoralizing influence of the French.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAN MATURES: KAHNAWAKE¹ AND KAHNAWAKON

Were we to fix the point in our narrative where Christian fervor among the Iroquois at the reduction seemed to be at high-level, it would be around the year 1679, the year Father Fremin travelled to France to secure the title to the new property at Kahnawake¹ and to interest the people of France in this wonderful reduction. At this time Kateri Tekawitha was living at the Xavier Mission Colony, and so were other such Iroquois worthies as Kryn and Hot Powder. The reduction had certainly matured, and in this chapter we should like to point out four chief instruments in the maturing process: 1) prayer, 2) Christian instruction, 3) active participation in the liturgy, and 4) the pious Confraternity of the Holy Family. After this we shall describe instances of the Iroquois leading the full Christian life and the efforts of the Jesuit missionaries helping them towards this goal.

The Christian Indians under the Jesuit missionaries in New France had a feeling of solidarity, a concept of the true nature of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ; they prayed for one another. In 1676 on the occasion of the first migration of the Xavier Mission Colony from Kentake¹ to Kahnawake¹, as the Huron Indians at Lorette¹ desired to express encouragement and manifest

¹In 1673 the Hurons themselves had moved to their new location at Lorette.

Christian solidarity, they sent a wampum belt bearing a message to the Iroquois, their former foe. They remembered the Oneida Christians who ^{had} lived with them eight years ^{ago}, when they ^{had} received instruction from Father Chaumonot. The Iroquois at Xavier Mission Colony attached the belt to a beam over the main altar in their chapel, a constant reminder of the prayers and friendship of their onetime enemies. The message that the belt proclaimed was a call to the recipients to make a strong fight against their common evil, the evil of drunkenness!

Father Fremin had been soliciting prayers in France for his flock, and he returned to Kahnawake¹ with the assurance of help from abroad, and also laden down with many gifts, among which were a monstrance and communion plate which today are on display at the Kateri Tekakwitha shrine in Caughnawaga, Quebec.

The second major instrument for the development of the solid Iroquois Christian was instruction in the truths of the Christian religion. This does not mean that the Jesuits conducted a school at the reduction but they did employ other educational devices. Back in 1635 Father Le Jeune stated as one of his aims the establishment of "a seminary for the Indian children to rear them in the Christian Faith."² King Louis XIV repeatedly urged the missionaries to educate the Indians in the manners of the French. The Jesuits made two attempts to form such a school in Quebec and both failed. The School of Our Lady of the Angels was opened at Quebec by Father Daniel, in 1636, for the Hurons, but in the Spring of 1638 all the young Indians ran away and the

²Jesuit Relations, VII, 265.

school had a year's recess. In 1639 Montagnais, other Algonquin tribesmen, and Hurons were admitted, but disease and death thinned the ranks and the experiment soon came to an end. At Sillery a new attempt was made, but after the novelty had worn off, the Indians regretted the loss of their freedom and the vagabond life of the forest. Once again they closed the school after more than five years of trial. The mission superior considered that the money begged in France for the support of the school could be put to better use than the somewhat futile work of educating homesick Indian boys; he applied the money to the Sillery mission.³ Bishop Laval ascribes the great dependence of the elder Indians on their children for support as the reason for the ill-success of the schools; schooling was not calculated to make the Indian a better hunter.⁴ Moreover we should not make the mistake of transposing institutions of our times to the era we are studying. Compulsory universal education is a recent phenomenon. At the time of the Iroquois mission the ordinary French peasant did not receive any formal education. He was taught his catechism, and that was considered sufficient for his needs. The same held true for the Indian. The efforts to begin schools for the Indian is to be judged praiseworthy and farsighted, even though the venture failed.

During the time of petition and counterpetition regarding the relocation of the reduction at Kahnawake¹ the Intendant Duchesneau mentions in a letter to Golbert that "the Jesuits, following his majesty's intentions and the orders which you sent me, have established a school to instruct the Indian children

³Ibid., XVIII, 78.

⁴Ibid., LII, 49.

and bring them up in French ways."⁵ Nowhere in the Jesuit Relations is this school mentioned. Two explanations for the Intendant's statement can be advanced. One possibility is that the Jesuits did have some small organized class which was never mentioned in the Relations and their other reports. A more plausible explanation is that Duchesneau was influenced by his friendship for the Jesuits and his zeal to see them established at their new post where they could be freer from the pinch of poverty and where their Iroquois wards could have more abundant harvests remote from the danger of the white man's brandy. He could conceivably have magnified the informal instructions of the Jesuits into "the establishment of a school." This strategem seems all the more plausible when we realize that Governor Frontenac was representing to Colbert that the title to the new land should be withheld. One such letter of Frontenac to Colbert reads: "But these gentlemen (the Jesuits) have been constantly opposing (the plans for educating the Indian in French customs). Owing to the ignorance of our language and of our manners in which they keep the Indians, they make them believe anything they please... It is the reason why they made the Iroquois of Laprairie de la Magdaleine (Kentake¹) move away, because the Indians were too close to the French settlements for their liking."⁶

In the Mohawk canton Father Pierron attempted for a month to teach the Iroquois boys reading and writing. He was forced to give up however because of the lack of "rewards for the little ones... and the little time that remained

⁵ Camille de Rochemonteix, Les Jesuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe Siecle, (Paris, 1895-1906), III, 197.

⁶ Delangles, p. 181 citing Collection Clairambault, 1016: 47v-48v, Bibliothèque Nationale.

to me for the essential duties of my mission."⁷ Nowadays a missionary attributes greater importance to the role of education in obtaining his missionary objectives, even though this work is less spectacular and less satisfying than baptizing the dying and visiting hospitals. Today the missionary is conditioned by the times in which he lives, an era which esteems education highly, which sees a parochial school built in a new parish before the church itself is constructed.

Though the Iroquois Christian was not taught his religion by formal schooling there were other methods employed to train him,— sermons, holy pictures, and catechetical songs. Sermons were preached on Sunday at Mass after the Gospel, either by the priest or by the dogique,⁸ "who is ever incomparable in this respect." Father Cholemeac relates the exemplary Christmas sermon of the dogique, a sermon in story form which narrates the Nativity in forms the Indian could understand.⁹ On Fridays in Lent there were brief sermons on the Passion. The dogiques were usually chosen from the elders of the village, and they aided the priest in the instruction of the newcomers to the reduction. Sometimes they were more successful than the missionary "because, having well understood our mysteries, they give to these the right turn in their own language, and do so with an admirable unction."¹⁰

Another means of instruction, the most popular of all, was that employed with great fruit by Michel de Nobletz, to the Breton peasants. That the same method of instruction was successful for peasant and Iroquois alike is not

⁷Jesuit Relations, LIII, 207.

⁸Dogique has the meaning of catechist.

⁹Jesuit Relations, LX, 279-281.

¹⁰Ibid., LXIII, 213.

surprising, since Father Bruyas found his Mohawks very similar to the French peasants in many areas. This method employs pictures, either sketched by the instructor himself or colored pictures from a book, to illustrate the matter taught.

A third means of instruction was one that Xavier himself utilized in the Far East, the catechetical song. Father Jacques Bigot at Sillery "tried to express in mournful songs, all that is best fitted according to the idea of the savages, to torment one damned,"¹¹ and there were joyful songs as well to remind them of the Christian heaven.

What was the subject matter of the instructions, the pictures, and the songs? Was there any characteristic element in their religious teaching? It seems that in the Nobletz system the most popular pictures, those most in demand, by the missionaries at least, were those of hell fire and the last judgment. In their teaching, the missionaries leaned heavily on the four last things. However at the reduction there was also a request sent for a more positive approach, a petition for pictures of the life of Christ.¹² Death, judgment, heaven and hell were by far the favorite topics of the 17th century missionary. Father Pierron's favorite instruction to the Mohawks in the canton was a picture he sketched of the deaths of the pious and the wicked:

What obliged me to make it was, that I saw that the old men and women used to stop their ears with their fingers the moment I tried to speak to them of God, and would say to me, "I do not hear." Accordingly, I put in one part of my picture a Christian who is dying a holy death, with hands so joined that he holds the cross and his rosary; then his soul is borne upward to heaven by an angel, and the Spirits of the Blessed appear, awaiting him. In the other part, and in a lower position, I placed a woman but with age and dying,

¹¹Ibid., 67-69.

¹²Ibid., 231.

who being unwilling to listen to a Missionary Father, who is showing her paradise, is stopping both her ears with her fingers. But there issue from hell a demon, who seizes her arms and hands, and puts his own fingers in the ears of this dying woman, whose soul is carried away by three demons; while an angel coming out of a cloud, sword in hand hurls them down into the depths.¹³

Even when attending a dying woman the instruction consisted in "a vivid conception of the eternal misery of hell," as contrasted with the blessedness of paradise.¹⁴ Lest despair and not conversion take place some consideration of the mercies of Jesus Christ was added. The song that Father Milet taught the children to sing as they played around the long houses of the Oneida canton was about heaven and hell: "There is only one God who is the master of our lives. In heaven we found all sorts of good things, and a happiness that never ends; and in hell, everlasting fires and torments."¹⁵ In their exhortations to lead a moral life, to put away debauchery and drunkenness, the fear of God's judgment was relied on: "I have represented to them a hundred times with all the force with which God inspired me, the eternal punishments and rewards of the other life."¹⁶ On All Souls day prayers were recited for "the poor souls that groan in the flames of Purgatory to expiate the punishment remaining due to the sin of drunkenness."¹⁷ Thus the fact that God is the rewarder of the good, and the just avenger of evil

¹³Ibid., LII, 119-121.

¹⁴Ibid., LIV, 59-61.

¹⁵Ibid., LIII, 273.

¹⁶Ibid., 203-205.

¹⁷Ibid., LXIII, 125-127.

willingly and freely perpetrated, was never allowed to slip far from their attention.

What must be said about this apologetic, for truly this was the doctrine that was employed to elicit the act of Faith from the Iroquois? One criterion for any apologetic is whether it works or not. If it is such that it incites the individual to cooperate with God's grace freely given and make an act of Faith, — then it is a valid method. Just because this method would have the opposite effect on many sophisticated "civilized people" today, has no relevance to its worth to the unschooled Indian. The Apologetic of the Reformation period in Europe, for instance, that the Scriptures far from teaching Protestantism teach Catholicism, and the apologetic to the Jews of the apostolic period, that the messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, would have had little effect on the wild Iroquois Indians. The pragmatic judgment of the missionaries was that this was the one way to show the reasonableness of the Faith, the means that would best sway the rude Iroquois to accept the Christian teaching wholeheartedly.

Good missionary technique also demands acceptance of what is good in the religion of the tribe or nation among whom one is working, and the purifying it of its bad elements, baptizing it, as it were. When a harmful or pagan custom has to be rooted out entirely, the practical procedure is to replace it with something else; for every "this is forbidden" there should be a "this new Christian practice can substitute." In forbidding recourse to dreams for the guidance of their life, and sacrifice and libations to Agreskoui as well, the missionaries at Xavier Mission Colony substituted the Christian liturgy, and called for an active participation on the part of the Indian.

When the reduction was moved to Kahnawake the Indians for the first time had a church all to themselves. They learned the various liturgical chants, and on certain holy days, such as the Purification, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and the Assumption, they would sing them during the ceremonies. They knew by heart thirty different hymns among them the Inviolata to Our Lady and the Veni Creator to the Holy Ghost. Father Chauchetière says that the French visitors "were astonished, and with reason, that the savages have so soon learned all that — they whom one hears yelling in the woods where they sing in their own fashion."¹⁸ It was remarked on hearing the reduction Indians sing that "the nuns of France do not sing more agreeably."¹⁹ Years later this tradition of fine hymn singing was maintained. Instead of long mental prayer which was difficult for the Indian mentality, prayers were set to music, and they were sung in Church in the fashion of a monks' choir. "The men who lead off with the first verses one might take for a choir of a hundred Cordeliers, and the women for some great community of nuns. But what am I saying? Neither Cordeliers nor nuns ever sang as do our Iroquois men and women. Their voices are both mellow and sonorous and their ear so correct that they do not miss a half tone in all the Church hymns which they know by heart."²⁰

To what extent the Iroquois participated in the ceremonies at first

¹⁸ Ibid., 211.

¹⁹ Ibid., IX, 145.

²⁰ Ibid., LXVIII, 273-275.

is not certain. We do know that they sang vespers, the singing of which drew praise from the superior of the Canadian mission: "Nothing has so delighted me as to hear the savages sing God's praises."²¹ At Mass we are told that the doyenne intoned the credo in the Iroquois tongue, and the Iroquois congregation recited the rest of it in loud tones in their own language, while the priest at the altar, of course, recited the prayer in Latin. Today at Caughnawaga they have the approved custom of singing all the sung parts of a Missa Cantata in Iroquois save for some short responses as the et cum spiritu tuo. The custom is of long standing; the Credo and Gloria were sung from the beginning, whereas the practice of singing the proper of the Mass in the Iroquois tongue is probably not over a hundred years old. Father Martial Garon, S.J., the present superior of Caughnawaga and director of the Iroquois choir, insists that there was no "privilege" granted to the mission by Rome, for, if there were, certainly somewhere in the Jesuit Relations or in the archives of Quebec, Montreal, or Caughnawaga, it would have been found or at least referred to. The only one ever to suggest existence of such a privilege was Father Michael-Victor Dartin, O.M.I., who was such an enthusiast for things Iroquois that he even had the publisher's name printed in Iroquois in his hymn book. Father Dartin claims that the written privilege is lost. The custom, contrary to the law of the Church which prescribes Latin responses by the faithful in sung Masses, nevertheless is valid since it dates from "time immemorable" and has always had the approbation of the ecclesiastical authorities of Canada. A hymnbook with some "propers" for the Mass in Iroquois was published in 1890 with the imprimatur of

²¹Ibid., IX, 279.

Archbishop Edward Charles Fabre of Montreal,²² and twenty-five years earlier there was another hymnbook with liturgical chants in the Iroquois tongue bearing the imprimatur of A. F. Truteau, Vicar General of Montreal.²³ Today, when there is a grass-roots movement towards the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, the practice that obtains at Caughnawaga arouses envy and hope.

Let us add a word about "the organization whose works of piety sustained the mission, ... the abundant source from which all good to the mission comes"—the Holy Family Confraternity.²⁴ The Holy Family Confraternity was flourishing among the Hurons under Father Chammonot when Gandeakteua and Tonschoten received instruction in the Faith from that holy man. He was accustomed to give spiritual conferences to the members every two weeks,—"now on the best way to manage their little households; now on their duty to set their neighbors a good example; again on the means of recalling sinners from their wicked life; in a word, on the practice of deeds of mercy... The fruit of these conferences is such that they never come away from them without feeling fired with eagerness to spend themselves still more fervently in the service of God and the Blessed Virgin."²⁵

Father Fremin in 1671 with the help of the devout and capable

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Nicolas V. Burtin, O.M.I., Kaistonsera Teieriwakwatha, (Montreal, 1890).

²³J. A. Gaoq, S.S. Taiatak Nihononbentsiske or Le Livre des Septs Nations (Montreal, 1865).

²⁴Jesuit Relations, LXIII, 227; LVIII, 89.

²⁵Ibid., LIV, 293.

Gandeakteua, established at the Xavier reduction the Holy Family Confraternity, earnestly sought by the Indians because of its popularity at the Huron reduction.²⁶ The organization was to be an elite, a leaven for the multitude,-- a sodality. Whenever one of them committed a public fault it was a subject of amazement: "How strange that a member of the Holy Family should do such a thing."²⁷ The keynote of the Confraternity was devotion to the Holy Family, the desire to model their families after that of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The fruit of the devotion was evidenced in charitable endeavor for the poor, the offering of Masses for their pagan brethren, work for the sick, and other apostolic activities. Members of this organization attracted Iroquois to the reduction and instructed them and prepared them for Baptism once they took up their home there. "It is they also who preserve and maintain the fervor of the new Christians, and who thus prepare them to reign one day in heaven."²⁸

Catherine Gandeakteua, the co-founder of the Confraternity at the Xavier Reduction, was one of the first of the organization called to meet her Lord. In praise of her love of Our Lady it is said of her that "she had an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and the devotion that she bore to her amounted to incredible tenderness."²⁹ It was she who persuaded her husband Tonschoten to stay with Father Raffeix, the nucleus of the group that began

²⁶The new home of the Hurons was called Lorette, at which place the chapel was an exact replica of the Holy House of Lorette in which the Holy Family is imputed to have lived.

²⁷Jesuit Relations, IX, 281.

²⁸Ibid., LVIII, 89.

²⁹Ibid., LXI, 203.

the reduction. We are told that her cabin was always a refuge of the poor and afflicted, and there were few who surpassed her in zeal for the conversion of her countrymen and love for the Church, to which on dying she bequeathed all her porcelain. Gandsakteua was the first of the notable Indian women at Xavier Mission Colony, but she is somewhat hidden behind the bright light of Kateri Takawitha. Be that as it may, Xavier Mission Colony owes her much.

Now that we have seen some of the means which the missionaries employed in their efforts to have the Church take root among the Iroquois, let us observe some of their effects, and study the development of the maturing mission colony. Through the years the reduction received its share of praise from Jesuit, Bishop, and civil administrator. In 1678, Father Dablon, the Mission Superior of New France, after a week of observation spoke of "the astonishing things that would cause the best Christians among the French to blush."³⁰ Five years later, in 1683, Father Beschefer praised the Xavier Iroquois for having "left their country, their kindred, and their friends to avoid the occasions of offending God and to lead a truly Christian life."³¹ Bishop de Saint-Vallier, successor to Laval, when making a visitation of the reduction in 1685, remarked that "the piety I witnessed far surpassed all that I had hoped to see."³² At this time the reduction counted seven hundred

³⁰Ibid., 63.

³¹Ibid., LXII, 245.

³²Devine, p. 74 citing Monsieur Saint-Vallier (Quebec, 1882), p. 55.

Indians living in sixty-seven long houses. Four years later, in 1689, Governor de Denonville, refers to the reduction Indians as "a leaven which will in time contribute greatly to the conversion of the Iroquois."³³

What these men seem to have praised is that indefinable thing called "fervor", the evident desire among the reduction Indians to avoid offending God and to lead a truly Christian life. The numbers were increasing at Xavier Mission Colony while during those same years the numbers at Lorette were decreasing. Thus Father Chauchetiere said in 1682: "We think that in two or three years all the Mohawks will be in this place."³⁴ By 1696 we find that "four of our fathers barely suffice for this mission, where they are busily employed. There is a fully organized Church, in which everything is done as in parish churches --and even more, for the neophytes assist at Mass every day; the morning and evening prayers are said; there is chanting at Mass; Baptism and other rites are administered with the rites of the Church; Sundays and festivals are observed; and order prevails in everything."³⁵

The atmosphere of this maturing reduction was one conducive to the Christian life, with regular religious exercises "as in the finest parishes of France."³⁶ Drunkenness was proscribed and, we are told, bodily penances

³³New York Colonial Documents, IX, 435.

³⁴Jesuit Relations, LIII, 169.

³⁵Ibid., LXV, 29.

³⁶Ibid., LX, 277.

were even practiced by some of the members of the Holy Family Confraternity. At Christmas and during Holy Week some of the braves would abandon the hunt to return to the reduction for services as in the early years. The young were being brought up in this healthy environment, and in the bold phrase of Father Chauchetière, "those who had been born in the village have sucked modesty in their mother's milk."³⁷

Some particular instances of their fervor can be noted. There is the case of the two dogiques who on their own initiative travelled to the Mohawk country as evangelists, were received at first with insults but later made many converts. Father Bruyas' praise is eloquent: "Oh, what good Christians your two dogiques are! They completely changed the aspect of our little Church during their short time here... One man such as he (Hot Powder) is worth ten men such as I."³⁸

Hot Powder, one of the two mentioned above, came to the reduction in 1671 from the Oneida nation. This convert had been a mocker at the stake of Father Brebeuf. At Xavier Mission Colony he was elected the fourth and head chief because of his sterling qualities of leadership. He was a deadly enemy of firewater and an eloquent dogique, the best preacher with pictures at the mission. One of his claims to the gratitude of all Xavier Mission Indians is that it was he that rescued Kateri Tekakwitha from her pagan surroundings and

³⁷Ibid., LXIII, 203.

³⁸Ibid., LXI, 65-67.

brought her to the reduction, -- and his devotion to her did not cease on her death.

Kryn, the Great Mohawk, is another example of reduction fervor, manifested in his persuading forty Mohawks to follow him to Xavier Mission Colony, much to the chagrin of the elders in the Mohawk canton. He is praised also as a capable leader of the warriors of the reduction, which activity we shall narrate in the following chapter.

At Xavier Mission colony, the wise missionaries realized that the best way to keep their neophytes on the path of virtue was to keep them occupied. During the hunting season, the autumn and winter months, the Indians were away hunting and trapping. Sometimes they would take their wives with them but for the most part the squaws remained at the reduction because the soil had to be tilled and Indian corn had to be planted during the spring months. Cabins were enlarged during the summer months and mission buildings were constructed, a job for the braves. The women cut firewood and did the cooking, and some even helped in the building of the church. The Jesuits in 1678 had a large farm with oxen, cows, and poultry. Perhaps the Iroquois women helped take care of the farm animals as well.

Even in the toil of the Indians the missionary priests made an effort to instill a religious element, making their religion more than a chapel affair. When for three successive years the Indian corn in certain fields were devoured by worms, Father Premin went into the fields and blessed them with holy water, while all the Indians knelt. In the following autumn "the crop was so abundant on that island that people were surprised at it, there being no field at the Sault in which there were so many sheaves of

corn."³⁹

Daily exercises of piety were interspersed with physical labor, the mission bell regulating the day at the reduction. A large bell had been purchased by the Holy Family Confraternity in 1682, and Father Bruyas blessed it and named it, "the Virgin Mary". At four o'clock every morning the bell summoned all to make a visit to Our Lord in the chapel. One Mass was celebrated at five o'clock, followed by a second Mass which all were accustomed to attend. The third Mass was for the children who stayed after Mass for their catechism lesson. The Angelus rang everyday at eleven o'clock. Much of the Fathers' day was taken up in visiting the cabins and giving instructions.

The Iroquois may have changed their location but they brought with them their old weaknesses which they constantly had to fight against, the demons of drunkenness and impurity. The missionaries were ever on the alert to nip in the bud, as it were, any upsurging of these evils. What made the danger greater was the increasing boldness of the French fur traders who "in order to strip the savages of their very shirts follow them everywhere to make them drink and become intoxicated."⁴⁰ The most flagrant violation of the ordinance prohibiting sale of liquor to the Indians was that of the gunsmith who first ingratiated himself with the Indians at the reduction and set up a little shop for the benefit of the Iroquois. One of his wares was brandy. In 1679 the Intendant Duchesneau, apprised of the situation, closed the shop and forbade the smith to return to the mission colony. At this point Father Chauchetiere

³⁹Ibid., LXIII, 207.

⁴⁰Ibid., LXII, 173.

reflects: "This conflicting state of affairs has caused very enlightened persons to say that the temptations that the Christians of America suffered correspond to the persecutions of the primitive Church."⁴¹

The record of Xavier Mission Colony, in regard to temperance, was remarkable when we consider that many of the Indians were "notorious drunkards" before coming to the reduction. In fact, the prohibition at the reduction was an incentive for many an Iroquois disgusted with the excesses in the home cantons. The sanction for the abuse of drink at Xavier was often expulsion. One belligerent delinquent was kept in a pigsty overnight and driven from the mission the next day.⁴² The elders at the reduction took the offensive against intemperance, and during the market season for furs they would send the zealous Christians to Montreal when the trading fleet came in, to check on their tribesmen and also "to reproach the French for their criminal traffic."⁴³ With drunkenness held in check, all debauchery which was one of its chief fruits was kept away from the reduction.

The Jesuit Fathers intent upon building up their reduction, feared that a smallpox epidemic would have disastrous effects on the young mission colony. They recalled that a similar epidemic among the Mohawks in 1646 had been

⁴¹ Ibid., LXIII, 199-201.

⁴² Claude Chauchetière, S.J. "The Life of the Good Katharine Tekakouita, Now Known as the Holy Savage," The Positio of the Historical Section of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on the Introduction of the Cause for Beatification and Canonization and on the Virtues of the Servant of God Katherine Tekakwitha, the Lily of the Mohawks, ed. Robert E. Holland, S.J., (New York, 1940), p. 147.

⁴³ Jesuit Relations, LXII, 253.

ascribed to the abandonment of ancient tribal customs and on the conversion to the Christian Faith, on the part of a few. Some historians have attributed the cause of Father Jogues' martyrdom to retribution of the pagan Indians for their misfortune. Mr. Leo-Paul Derosiers, in the most satisfying and scholarly work on the Iroquois to date, argues that in truth the missionaries were the unwitting source of the diseases of the Indians, carrying along with them wherever they went tuberculosis and small pox microbes to which they themselves had become immune but to which the Indian was susceptible because they had not built up any resistance. Very convincing is his argument that the gradual decrease in the numbers of the Hurons, friendly to the French and hospitable to the missionaries, was due to disease and epidemics often reported in the Jesuit Relations.⁴⁴ At Xavier Mission Colony, however, the epidemic did not have the feared tragic effect, since there were very few victims. This was so contrary to the usual toll of lives on the advent of an epidemic that, we are told, the Indians put more confidence in God and wiped out the last prejudice that the Faith and Baptism caused death.

We cannot leave this chapter on the maturing of the plan of a reduction without a glimpse at least at the chief fruit of Xavier Mission Colony for the Iroquois; "by their fruit you shall know them." Kateri Takakwitha is the most illustrious person in the colony's long history, for she spent the last three years of her holy life at the reduction, from the autumn of 1677 to the spring of 1680. As much has been written about this candidate for beatification we shall merely note the chief events in her life, and point out a virtue or two

⁴⁴Leo-Paul Derosiers, Iroquoisie, 1534-1646 (Montreal, 1947), pp.197-200.

of this Lily of the Mohawks. Born in 1656, Kateri saw a priest for the first time when she was eleven years old, when Fathers Bruyas, Fremin, and Mierson visited her Mohawk village. Her biographers say that this soul, naturally Christian, drank in the exhortations of these men. At eighteen Father Jacques de Lamberville settled in her village, instructed and baptized her on Easter Sunday, 1676. At the age of twenty she quietly escaped from her village where she saw she would be unable to live a Christian life, and she made her home at Kahnawake. At the mission colony she received her First Communion and was permitted to make a vow of virginity in 1679. Her death in the following year caused by her great industry and her bodily austerities found her mourned by Indian and Frenchman alike. She was a model of piety, spending much of her free time before Our Lord in the chapel, but she was noted also for the penitential practices which she adopted.

Immediately, somewhat of a cult sprang up to this young Iroquois virgin, among Frenchmen and among the Iroquois. The Intendant of New France is said to have had his throat cured through her intercession, and in gratitude "caused many small pictures of this pious savage maiden to be made, which he distributes."⁴⁵ A captain of the French navy was cured of the gout after a novena to Kateri, and a young Sulpician priest "was snatched from the gates of death" after prayer to the Lily of the Mohawks. Both made pilgrimages of gratitude to her grave and offered presents to the Mission Colony in her honor. The Indian showed his devotion in the finest way possible, by emulation. In fact

⁴⁵Jesuit Relations, LIX, 31-33.

too often they went to excess in the austerities they practiced in imitation of Kateri's penitential spirit. When these excesses were cropping up Father Fremin was away in France pleading the cause of the mission against the obstructionist policy of Frontenac. Some of the extremes in mortification were: standing naked in the snow, reciting the rosary in freezing water, and wearing iron girdles.⁴⁶ But we are told that "the Holy Ghost soon intervened in this matter, enlightening all those persons, and regulated their conduct without diminishing their fervor". In 1694 we read about a group at the reduction called "Kateri's band" formed for the practice of Christian virtue after the manner of Kateri Takakwitha. Their favorite humiliation was called "hotoungamandi", a public penance performed when all were gathered at a feast, each man speaking and reproaching himself for the drunkenness which mastered him in the past. Father Chauchetière tells us that "words were followed by results; the women, whose demons were gaming, vanity, and voluptuousness, completely abandoned the first of these; for a year, we have heard no more about it."⁴⁷

Perhaps the greatest proof of the sanctity of Kateri is the fact that the Jesuit priests from cultured France who worked among "the savages" at Kahnawake were themselves convinced of the authentic holiness of their neophyte. In 1683, the three missionaries stationed at the reduction, Fathers Chauchetière, Bigot and Bruyas, were sleeping in the rooms in back of the Church at the reduction when the storm that was raging brought the building down on

⁴⁶ Ibid., LXII, 175-179.

⁴⁷ Ibid., LXIV, 125.

top of them. All were uninjured; each the previous day had either prayed at the grave of Kateri or offered Mass in her honor; all attributed their protection to her.⁴⁸

Before we move into the next chapter on the growth of opposition to the reduction plan from Albany, it would be well to explain the various migrations of St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony, from 1676 to 1696. Our study ends at the latter date since that is the beginning of a somewhat stable twenty year stay at the village the Indians later called Kanatakewenke.⁴⁹ This frequent change in site of the mission colony was not evidence of failure; a periodic migration accorded with Iroquois custom. No Indian village, even among the comparatively stable Hurons and Iroquois, was so firmly rooted that if circumstances so urged, at very short notice, they could not carry their small possessions to a more advantageous site and fashion rough long houses anew. In 1649 at the approach of the Iroquois raiders the Hurons abandoned their villages to form new ones further removed from the menace of their enemy. An Onondaga village in 1696, on hearing of the approach of Frontenas at the head of an army of two thousand, retreated to a new location after burning their own village. More common reason for changing the site of a village was the fact that the soil had grown unproductive and the nearby supply of firewood was exhausted.

⁴⁸Ibid., LXIII, 229.

⁴⁹Kanatakewenke signifies "where the village was taken from". The site is also known as La Susanne, the name of the river which flows into the St. Lawrence at this point. Excavations hurriedly carried out by Father Henri Bechard, S.J. in 1955 before the coming of the St. Lawrence Seaway have located the exact site of the village.

It was for protection that in the summer of 1689 the Jesuits and the reduction Indians crossed the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Twelve hundred hostile Iroquois were lurking near the mission. Our next chapter will have something to say about the cause and nature of this hostility. At this time haven was sought among the French, and a new migration was being contemplated. Besides fear of the enemy a chief consideration was that fourteen years of intense cultivation of Indian corn around Kahnawake¹ had exhausted the soil. In the winter of 1689-1690 the new village was begun, on the rapids of the St. Lawrence two miles upstream from the former site. The Indians called the place Kahnawakon, which means "in the rapids."⁵⁰ The Jesuits were sincerely grateful at the departure from Montreal and from the French in the summer of 1690. Even Governor de Denonville saw the ill effects that fraternization with the French had on the Iroquois; he writes in 1690: "Our Iroquois mission... which I have been obliged to transfer within the walls of Montreal, must be regarded as a leaven which will in time greatly contribute to the conversion of the Iroquois; for found there are many of every nation who, it is hoped, will attract their relatives if care is taken of this mission, and they are kept away from Montreal, where drunkenness will cause their destruction."⁵¹ The loss of fervor due to their intercourse with the whites, and the lack of reduction discipline during their stay in Montreal,

⁵⁰The old site, called by the Indians Kahnawake¹ was henceforth known as Kateritsitkaiatat, which means "the spot where Kateri was buried."

⁵¹New York Colonial Documents, IX, 435.

were other proofs to the Jesuits that Frontenac's policy of assimilation was neither useful nor practical. Once again we hear a Jesuit at the reduction condemning liquor and the suppliers of liquor. Father Chauchetière writes to his brother in France: "If liquor were banished from among the savages, it is admitted that they would shame the old Christians of Europe by their manner of living, and by their noble practice of virtue. But our Church must have a share of the persecution that the devil wages against Christendom by means of liquor... We all desire as did St. Francis Xavier, to see ourselves so far away from the French with our beloved savages that we may no longer have such stumbling blocks."⁵² While they were just settling in their new site a delegation from eight hundred pagan Iroquois, who were roving in the neighborhood of Montreal spreading destruction on the French farms, arrived at the reduction with the invitation to the Iroquois Christians to return to the cantons. This invitation was no doubt due to the instigation policy of the British which we shall explore in the next chapter, but it was refused outright by the Iroquois at the mission colony.

Despite the turbulent times there was some little prosperity at the mission. A grist mill was built by the Jesuits to prevent the necessity of having the Indians deal with the white settlers. It was probably between the years 1690 and 1696 that a wharf was built out into the rapids and a place provided to moor canoes. The rapids were a necessity for the mill but they made navigation and approach to the village by water dangerous; hence the wharf. Father Cholenec returned as superior in 1695 after an absence of ten

⁵²Jesuit Relations, LXIV, 129-131.

years, and he noted the changes that had taken place under the guidance of Father Bruyas and Father Jacques de Lamberville. The settlement had become the most important mission colony in Canada. In 1696 M. de Callière, governor of Montreal, after consultation with the Jesuits at the reduction, built a fort on an elevation opposite Devils Island. To that more protected site the mission moved in 1696, the building of the church and long houses taking up the remainder of the year.⁵³

⁵³In French correspondence this site was known as Sault St. Louis. However, it was only in 1712 that Sault St. Louis, — ad Saltem St. Indovici, — appears in Jesuit catalogues. Kentake was known at various times as Missio Iroquoarum prope Montem Regium, Residentia a Pratis, Residentia Sti. Francisci Xaverii ad Pratum Sae. Madaleneae. Kahnawake and Kahnawakon were styled Sti. Francisci Xaverii ad Saltem. Devine, p. 129, note.

CHAPTER V

THE GROWTH OF OPPOSITION TO THE PLAN FROM ALBANY

In this chapter we want to show how the twofold plan, — a reduction near Montreal and missionaries in the cantons, — was gradually obstructed by the hostility of the Iroquois, aided and abetted by the power in control at Albany. It is necessary to understand the varying relations of the French with the Iroquois and the reasons for these relations to understand the biggest obstacle, the longest prong of the many pronged problem.

We will consider this obstacle by simply selecting three dates, the years that French relations with the Iroquois seemed to be at one extreme or the other, — 1649, 1673, and 1689. A low point is 1649, the date of the dispersal of the Hurons and the martyrdom of the last of the eight North American Martyrs. By 1673 the pendulum had swung in the other direction and we hail the year of best Franco-Iroquois relations in all the years of the French regime in Canada. It was the year of the greatest increase in numbers at St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony, and a boom year for the fur trade. But by 1689, at the beginning of King William's War we find a new low. The pendulum had swung, never completely to return. We shall see in the following pages that the authorities at Albany had much to do with the hostilities of the Iroquois and consequently with the lack of success in missionary endeavor on the part of the French priests.

What was the status quo relative to the French and Iroquois in the year

1649? The Hurons had been driven from their ancestral home by the Iroquois who had helped also in the destruction of the Algonquin tribes between Quebec and the Saguenay River. The Ottawa Indians, the Petun, and the Neutrals were in the process of being scattered. Even the French settlers at Three Rivers and Tadoussac suffered from Iroquois attacks; it was not safe to travel far from the French settlements. Seven of the eight Jesuit Missionaries whom the Church has raised to the altar under the collective title of North American Martyrs were killed by the Iroquois during the decade ending in 1649. The Iroquois even threatened cannon-protected Quebec. In short, they were the masters of the Ottawa, the Mohawk, and the St. Lawrence Rivers, and the territory which these rivers drained.

Since Iroquois hostility to the French and the allies of the French is so pertinent to our story it would be well to ascertain the reason for this enmity. There are several theories explaining the Iroquois hostility of this time: 1) the arquebus-shot-of-Champlain theory, 2) the natural-Iroquois-bloodlust theory, 3) the political and cultural superiority theory, 4) the weapon supply theory, and 5) the commercial theory. No one of these, to be sure, is the complete answer to Iroquois hostility, although through the years some have been stressed by historians to the disregard of the others.

The "arquebus-shot-of-Champlain" theory was a facile explanation based on the anguished surprise in 1609 of a band of warring Iroquois when Champlain sided with a band of Algonquins in routing the Algonquin enemy. Father Pierre Charles labels this explanation "very childish" since later in 1665, when Tracy and his French army razed the villages of the Mohawks with all their provisions for the winter, far from dreaming vengeance, the Iroquois negotiated a

peace.¹ As a matter of fact, Champlain himself had signed a peace treaty with the Iroquois at Three Rivers in 1622. What the skirmish definitely did effect was to teach the Iroquois the necessity of firearms if they were to be successful in war.

The "natural-Iroquois-bloodlust" theory was accepted and popularized by Francis Parkman in his Works on the many phases of the struggle between Britain and France for supremacy in the New World. One explanation for Parkman's acceptance of the theory that the hostility of the Iroquois was due to "innate treachery", "unqualified cruelty", and "insensate blood-lust" is that such a picture of the Five Nations furnishes "a lurid background of fire, blood, and villainy against which to draw in bold lines the failure of New France."² Another explanation is that Parkman leaned heavily on the Jesuit Relations for his source material. Everybody agrees that the Jesuit priests were truthful and competent and careful observers of fact, but they were often too close to the scene and too much involved in the plot to make an accurate interpretation; they were too close to the trees to see the forest.³ The missionaries, seeing their mission stations destroyed, their neophytes dispersed, their work of decades overturned by Iroquois savages, understandably considered the Iroquois people who "find all their pleasure in burning one another, and in strengthening themselves by the ruin of their neighbors."⁴

¹Pierre Charles, S.J., Les Iroquois (Louvain, 1940), p. 11.

²Hunt, p. 187.

³Pierre Charles points out that the history of a mission is "an incomprehensible puzzle" when one restricts himself to describe only the apostolic activities of the missionaries. Charles, Les Iroquois, p. 14.

⁴Jesuit Relations, LIII, 35.

Lewis Morgan's monumental work, the League of the Iroquois, perpetuated the theory that the cause of the wars of the Iroquois was their superior political institution, their confederation of five nations. Morgan wrote in 1851 without the benefit of the Jesuit Relations or New York Colonial Documents and was therefore innocent of the knowledge of the best sources. His main source was the fallible memory of Iroquois Indians of their own unwritten tradition. This theory which has been widely adopted by historians overlooks the fact that in the period we are now studying the five nations often were at odds with one another, often failed to support one another in war. The war against the Hurons was mostly a Mohawk affair. Rarely did two cantons combine for defense; both the Mohawks and Onondagas cheered the French attack upon the Senecas. This theory of superiority would have had the Iroquois wage wars to exterminate those whom they regarded as foes of their culture. But on the contrary, they were not at all opposed to adopting whole alien tribes or survivors of the tribes that they had crushed to replenish their own numbers.⁵ In 1656 Father Lalemant counted in the Seneca canton Indians from eleven different nations.⁶ What the superior organization of the Iroquois did effect was more success in their expeditions, more strategic planning in their warlike endeavors; but it did not supply the motive for hostility.

The same can be said for the fact that the Iroquois had a ready supply of firearms from the Dutch at Fort Orange, later Albany. Hunt, who labors to

⁵Kennedy, p. 25.

⁶Jesuit Relations, XLIII, 265.

minimize this as a motive for their wars, does admit that "there is little doubt that at the time of the Huron downfall in 1649, the French Indians were, as compared with the Iroquois, inadequately armed."⁷ Learning the necessity of firearms from Champlain the Iroquois successfully acquired weapons from contraband Dutch traders. This explains why they were victorious in war, but the question still remains of why they were hostile to the French and the French allies.

The most convincing and plausible explanation has been proposed in a well documented work by George T. Hunt. His theory is that the fur trade had become a social and economic necessity for the Iroquois. While the French set up their trade with the Hurons, the Dutch employed the neighboring Iroquois as their agents. The Iroquois and Hurons, more sedentary than the Algonquins, became excellent traders, middlemen between the Algonquin trappers and the French or Dutch markets. Especially was it necessary for the Iroquois to depend on the role of trader for their livelihood when about 1640 the supply of beaver in New York was very much depleted.⁸ Here is where the advantageous position of the Iroquois suggested to them another means of getting fur. The Iroquois lived near the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, great waterways between the French settlements and the interior. For the Hurons to transport the beaver pelts, trapped by the Algonquins, to the market at Three Rivers, Montreal or Quebec, took thirty days. The Iroquois established strategic ambushes along the St. Lawrence to seize fur from their competitors, the

⁷Hunt, p. 174.

⁸New York Colonial Documents, IX, 80.

Hurons, and later the Ottawa and Illinois, ^{who} had cornered the furs that the Iroquois would have liked to sell at Fort Orange. After five years of successful ambuscades by the Iroquois, the French, hoping for relief through peace, called a council in 1645 for the Hurons, Algonquins, and Iroquois. Hunt rests his case on the fourteenth wampum belt bestowed on the Hurons by the Iroquois orator Kiotsaston, whose message was to urge them "to make haste to speak, — not to be bashful like women; and, after taking the resolution to go to the Iroquois country, to pass by that of the Algonquins and the French."⁹ The message does not seem to the author to be as clear as Mr. Hunt would have it, but he is nevertheless correct in maintaining that it would be hard to understand the misfortunes of the missions in New France without taking into account this commercial factor. Since the Iroquois had superiority in weapons it required a lesser reason to go to war than otherwise would have been demanded. Most probably, the 1646 shipment of furs by the Hurons was the cause of the war. The year 1649 was a low point in the history of New France as well as in mission history, since the main source of furs was wiped out. Furs were to Canada what sugar cane was to the West Indies, — their only source of wealth.

This last theory gives a ready explanation for the peace of 1653, which was first suggested by the Iroquois. The Hurons were now removed from the fur trade, and the Iroquois did not yet realize the particular trading talents of the Ottawas. Father Le Mercier, not comprehending the motives for the Iroquois

⁹Jesuit Relations, XXVII, 229-245.

petition exclaimed: "The Iroquois have made peace, or rather, let us say that it is God."¹⁰ It was to divine providence also that Father Ragueneau, stupefied at the disaster, attributed the events of 1649, completely baffled by the natural, secondary causes.

The peace with the Iroquois lasted only long enough for several convoys of Ottawa canoes, laden with furs, to reach Quebec in 1654 and 1656. The French missionaries who had been courteously received in the Iroquois cantons in 1654 and 1655 were abruptly recalled in 1658 when the Iroquois covered themselves with warpaint. The Iroquois successfully closed the Ottawa River and Montreal was threatened.

This was the state of affairs when King Louis XIV began his era of personal rule in 1661, with Colbert as his adviser in economic and colonial matters. Together they devised to execute a plan to strengthen New France. They dissolved the Company of a Hundred Associates who had the fur trade monopoly, recruited Norman and Breton peasants as colonists, doubling the population of New France in five years, shipped over boat loads of prospective brides, "the king's girls", and supplied honest officials, the most noteworthy of whom was the Intendant Talon, the business manager who took great strides in making Canada a self-sufficient colony. Perhaps the greatest aid to the colony was the despatching of the crack Carignan-Salières infantry regiment to attempt what had never been tried before, -- an organized invasion of the Iroquois territory.

Meanwhile the Iroquois had come upon hard times, suffering defeat from a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XLV, 78.

coalition of Algonquin tribes in the north and suffering a heavy plague in 1662 which carried off hundreds from their cantons. Father Lalemant writes to his provincial in France: "The Iroquois, who have ravaged this infant Church and have, until now, prevented its progress, begin to feel the hand of God punishing them, and avenging the blood of the servants of God, so cruelly shed by those Barbarians. Diseases, famine, and war continue to depopulate them rapidly and make them fearful of seeing themselves on the point of destruction. The succor for which the king has made us hope, and which is to come at the next disembarkation, will put an end, with God's help, to this great scourge of New France."¹¹

Marquis de Tracy arrived with one thousand three hundred French regulars, and in 1666 wiped out five Mohawk villages and burnt the Mohawk crops. The results of the expedition were that "those barbarians came this summer to present us with a most earnest plea for peace... The declared desire among them was to have some of our Fathers with them, to cement the peace, and to enable them to follow the example of those of their number... who had been given holy Baptism."¹² A shaky peace was entered into, the French well aware that the Seneca and Cayuga cantons desired peace only to allow them to direct all their energies against the Susquehannaks, a kindred tribe to the south which was interfering with their Albany trade.¹³ Peace with the Iroquois for the next twenty years would hinge on the degree of extremity in which the

¹¹Ibid., XLVIII, 249.

¹²Ibid., LI, 81.

¹³Ibid., XLVII, 111.

Iroquois found themselves.

In the year 1673 we see the Iroquois perhaps in the greatest straits; the Cayugas had again been invaded by the Susquehannahs, and a Senaca party going to their aid was cut to pieces.¹⁴ The Senaca nation asked Frontenac, governor of New France, for aid, but the only assurance they received was that Frontenac would not see them oppressed. Travelling was now safe for French missionaries, and it seemed as though all the Iroquois were on the eve of embracing Christianity. Till 1672, Baptisms in the Cayuga canton had to be performed in secret, but now "prejudice for the rite seems to be diminishing and mothers even bring their children to the priest" to receive the sacrament.¹⁵

Albany contributed to the bright hopes of the French. The Iroquois were beginning to find that the returns from their beaver skins were becoming smaller and smaller. No ship had docked in Manhattan that year and "this makes (the Dutch) very uneasy, and causes stuffs to be so dear, that our Iroquois are resolved to provide themselves with these at Montreal."¹⁶ That year also saw the greatest increase in admissions to St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony. "Over eight hundred" visited them that year and were warmly received; many liking what they saw decided to make their home there.¹⁷ The reduction Indians made use of the opportunity to evangelize and make recruits among the visitors.

¹⁴ Ibid., LVI, 57.

¹⁵ Ibid., LVII, 177.

¹⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷ Ibid., LVIII, 81.

Up to this point Iroquois policies have been fairly autonomous, uninfluenced directly by the officials at Albany. The Dutch were in command of New Netherlands until 1664 when the English conquered it under the standard of the Duke of York who changed the name of the colony to New York. The Dutch were interested only in furs, although at one time they made some attempts to convert the Indians. After the initial try they were uninterested in the salvation of "the heathen", considering the Indian to be unconvertible, his very language being from the devil. The closer the relations between the Iroquois and the French, the cooler was the attitude of the Dutch burghers of Fort Orange to the French presence in the colony. They suspected Jesuit activity in the cantons as sources of French political influence, yet they exhibited Christian charity when the Jesuit missionaries were in distress, aiding in the escape of Jogues, Bressani, and Poncet. The beginning of the St. Francis Xavier Mission Colony was somewhat disheartening to the Dutch, especially since many of the first converts moved from the nearby Mohawk canton. They saw their influence fading; they envisioned a loss of trade.

Paradoxically, opposition to Jesuit activity in the cantons or to their reduction on the banks of the St. Lawrence increased when an Irish Catholic became governor of New York from 1682-1688. When the British took over Fort Orange and called it Albany in 1664 there were at first friendly relations with the French. In the consolidating period, English governments, not yet expansionist, had encouraged the Mohawks to join the peace proposed by the French. It was certainly not hatred of the Catholic Faith that encouraged Governor Dongan in his efforts to bring about a rupture between the French and the Iroquois. His main considerations were the beaver trade, maintenance of

British rule over New York, and the claims that the French were luring Iroquois away from New York into Canada. Governor Dongan wished dearly to convert the Indians to the Faith for which his family had suffered so much, but he also wished to have the Iroquois subject to the British king, James II, who also desired this. On the other hand after the first decade of his reign, King Louis XIV of France, lost interest in colonies, and turned his mind to continental wars. His policy for the colony became one of mere preservation. As a result, a treaty of Neutrality for America was signed with James II in 1686. The governors of both Quebec and Albany were urged to refrain from hostile measures, but with Governor Dongan, James II still insisted that the Five Nations were British subjects, despite the claim that French Jesuits were the first to visit them and establish missions.

Devout Catholic though he was, Governor Dongan inaugurated the policy that was to cripple the apostolic plan to win the Iroquois to the Church. Dongan bemoaned the exodus of Iroquois to Xavier Mission Colony and attempted to woo them back by sending envoys to them, promising even to start a reduction at Saratoga under English Jesuits. "By that means the French priests will be obliged to return to Canada, whereby the French will be divested of their pretence to ye country and then we shall enjoy that trade without any fear of being diverted."¹⁸ The retort of Governor de Denonville of Quebec to this policy came in August 1687: "You should have awaited the decisions of the differences between our Masters relative to the boundaries before dreaming of introducing religious men among the Five Nations; your charity, sir, for the

¹⁸ New York Colonial Documents, III, 394-395.

conversion of the Indians would be better shown by tending protection to the present missionaries rather than driving them out."¹⁹

Albany became more and more convinced that the function of the French Jesuits in the Iroquois cantons was more than religious, when they continually heard reports of some of the most capable of the Iroquois migrating to Canada, to the mission colony, "the praying castle". This hostility, born under a Catholic sovereign and Catholic governor, became more and more pronounced after the so-called "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 confirmed the Protestant character of England, and brought England into war against the French, the beginning of a long dual, 1689-1815, in which England was finally to gain the upper hand.²⁰ In the colony of New France, the reverberations of continental hostility was experienced in the hostile actions of the governors of New York, --Andros, who incited the Senecas against the French, Ingoldsby, who blamed the missionaries for "the alarming leakage" of Iroquois to Canada, Sloughter, who sought Protestant ministers to replace the French priests for the same reason, and finally Bellomont, who in 1700 pushed through the Council of New York "an Act Against Jesuits and Papist Priests [sic]" excluding them from the province of New York under the threat of perpetual imprisonment.²¹

We shall observe the effect of this growing English belligerence in the apostolic plan of the French Jesuits for the Iroquois. The dominant factor in the Iroquois desire for peace or war seemed to be the trade motive. At one

¹⁹New York Colonial Documents, IX, 435.

²⁰The war of the League of Augsburg, 1689-1697.

²¹Paul Kiniery, "Efforts made by Religious Groups to Maintain Peace in Early New York," Catholic Historical Review, XIX (January 1934) pp.418-420-422.

time peace with the French was needed to concentrate on conquering a trade competitor such as the Susquehannahs. In 1675, due in part to the assistance of white men from Maryland and Virginia, probably infuriated by Indian murders, the Susquehannah nation was destroyed, a large part of them being incorporated into the Senecas. The Jesuits noticed that now "freed from their enemies, their insolence knows no bounds."²² The Senecas, the strongest nation of the Iroquois, began to talk of war and the missionaries' lives were threatened since their death was considered an apt means to inaugurate hostilities.²³ The trade motive still dominant, the Oneida nation had a skirmish with the Ottawas, French allies, and traders in 1682, and the same year the Senecas attacked the Illinois and Miami tribes killing three hundred and capturing nine hundred. Fourteen Frenchmen on the way to trade with the Illinois nation were captured and their merchandise seized.²⁴ Trade seemed to be the motive for this attack though the French Governor de la Barre was convinced that the English had a hand in these hostilities. In 1682, at a special assembly at Quebec, it was "the unanimous opinion and all with one voice agreed that for four years past, the English have left nothing undone to induce the Iroquois to declare war against us, -- by means of the great number of presents which they have made them or by the low terms at which they have given them goods, especially guns, powder, and lead."²⁵ In the following years the more aggressive Governor Dongan

²²Jesuit Relations, IX, 173.

²³Ibid., LXI, 159.

²⁴Ibid., LXII, 159-161.

²⁵Ibid.

policy gave justification to similar subsequent accusations by the French.

Governor de la Barre, deciding on a punitive expedition against the Senecas and Cayugas in 1693 first turned to the Xavier Mission Colony for Iroquois scouts to ask the Mohawks, Onondagas, and Oneidas to observe the treaty of 1666 while the French were chastizing the Upper Iroquois cantons. The Iroquois at Kahnawake in 1684 held a solemn council to decide what course they should follow of three alternatives: 1) to return to their own country with the consequence of practically giving up their Faith, 2) to stay at the reduction but remain neutral and thus be the object of French suspicion, and 3) to adopt also the interests of the French since they had already adopted their religion. They adopted this third plan and resolved to fight alongside the French, even against their former brethren! Governor de la Barre's mission, despite the assistance of the reduction Iroquois was considered a failure, since he returned home without a pledge of peace. Nonetheless the conduct of the reduction braves was praised.²⁶ They provided for the French a corps of Indian fighters in their future battles, Iroquois who make war "more like highwaymen than soldiers," who "approach like foxes, fight like lions, and flee like birds."²⁷ They fight not "like ours in going to assault... a village... but only by surprises, by ambushes, by secret approaches, by sudden and unforeseen discharges in the fields..."²⁸ Other services that the mission Indians supplied to the French were that of scouts and messengers to restrain their countrymen from making war, and as captors

²⁶Ibid., LXIII, 241-243.

²⁷Ibid., LIV, 73; Rochemonteix, II, 12.

²⁸Jesuit Relations, LXV, 211.

who would bring prisoners back to the reduction. They served the mission by acting as models of Christian fortitude in refusing to abandon their religion when captured and tortured. Because of their new role as war-allies of the French, a wooden palisade was constructed around the village and a cannon was sent over from Montreal.

This identification of things Christian with things French was just one instance on the part of the French missionaries of their considering loyalty to the Church as equivalent to loyalty to France. This is an attitude that seems strange to an American of the mid-twentieth century, but they had a different conception of Church-state relations in those days. It seems to missionaries of today that an Iroquois should not have to become less an Iroquois, should not be required to become a Frenchman to become a Christian. But in that day and place the only alternative that the French Missionaries could see to allegiance to the Catholic French, was loyalty to the Protestant English. Other instances of this Church-state identity of this time were Jesuits, such as Fathers Le Moyne, Jogues, Fremin,²⁹ acting as ambassadors of the French governor, missionaries from the cantons reporting to the governor in council about the political and military situation among the Iroquois,³⁰ and the implimentation (in the beginning at least) of the government policy of "frenchification", i.e. teaching French customs and manners and language to the Indian neophytes. An instance of how this French-Christian equivalence was

²⁹In 1667 Father Fremin addressed the Mohawks in council and reproached them "for acts of perfidy and cruelty that they had committed with such barbarity upon our Frenchmen, without having received any ill treatment from these." Jesuit Relations, II, 205.

³⁰Ibid., LXII, 157-165.

brought home to the Indians is an instruction of Father Millet to the Onondaga nation in 1667:

In order to strike their imaginations by some kind of formal display I hung a fine large porcelain collar in the middle of the cabin, placing on one side of it a map of the world, and on the other an image of St. Louis, King of France. In another place I put the portraits of the King and Monsieur the Dauphin. Beneath the porcelain collar I had put the Bible, on a desk covered with a handsome red cloth, below which was the image of Our Lord... I made them know... that our Kings worshipped this same God, followed his law, embraced his doctrine, and observed his commandments. These I then explained to them in detail, and exhorted them to render their country flourishing and peaceful by making their religion conform to that of the French.³¹

One of France's purposes in colonizing was to set up the Church among the pagan; it often happened that the ends of the state and the ends of the Church were the same. The conditions needed for a prosperous fur trade, for an abundant life for the Canadian colonist, were the same as those required for the peaceful organization of preaching the Gospel. Father Le Mercier put it well when he wrote in 1666: "Tidings concerning our missions and the establishment of Jesus Christ's kingdom in this country are so intimately connected with those that have regard to the king's service and our nation's glory, that, in sending you these annals of war, I render you an account of the state of Christianity, and of all the hopes which our pains and exertions lead us to cherish."³² The best means for the conversion of the Iroquois, seemingly the only means of winning a hearing by them at that time was "to humble their

³¹ *Ibid.*, LIII, 269-271.

³² *Ibid.*, L, 99.

pride by force of arms."³³ In the Iroquois cantons, the missionary's only protection was the guidance of God, and the fear the Indians "lest they get in trouble with Onontio,"³⁴ and many important converts came to the missionaries because of the effective urging of Frontenac and the other governors.³⁵ With all pomp and ceremony Governor Courcelles acted as godfather to Garakontie, Chief of the Onondagas, when he was baptized by Bishop Laval in the cathedral of Quebec.³⁶

However, because of this identification of the Catholic Church and the French state, Albany rightly grew suspicious of the presence of missionaries in the cantons. They were more than servants of an alien Church; they were active representatives of an enemy king. Thus the missionaries were due to suffer all the bad as well as the good effects of the unity of Church and state. When the English incited the Iroquois to attack the French, when they sold them guns and powder for such enterprises, when they kept insisting that the French were planning on making a desert of the Iroquois country by encouraging all those Indians to settle at Xavier Mission Colony, —mission activity among the Iroquois suffered.

The year 1689 is the last of our memorable years in French-Iroquois relations. Two years before, the English were provided with fuel with which to stoke the furnace of Iroquois enmity to the French. After Governor de la Barre's unsuccessful mission to chastise the Senecas in 1684, Governor de Denonville, despite the protestations of the missionaries, determined to make

³³*Ibid.*, LIV, 103.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 217.

³⁵*Ibid.*, LVIII, 173, 179.

³⁶*Ibid.*, LIII, 53-55.

war on them. Father Jean de Lamberville tells the sad story of French treachery, another example of Church-state relations that was prejudicial to religion. "The governor, pretending to yield to my arguments, deputed me to go to the Iroquois and invite them all, in the persons of their chiefs, to be present in the spring at the rendezvous he designated... to talk there about the continuation of the peace..."³⁷ Father de Lamberville acted as a faithful ambassador of the governor and pledged his faith to the Indians protesting "that, as he was a Christian, and chosen by the King to be Lieutenant-General in this country, they ought to believe that he was a man incapable of breaking his word..."³⁸ The episode unfolded quickly: forty chiefs, laden with furs as gifts and pledges arrived at Cataragouci, were captured by the French soldiers under de Denonville, put in irons, and sent to France to work in the galleys of the king! Because of this treacherous act missionaries had to be removed from the Iroquois cantons where their lives were no longer safe. Father Milet was captured by the Oneidas, and was saved from being burnt at the stake by a Christian Iroquois family, only to spend five years of captivity among them. Governor Dongan seconded the Iroquois cry that their chiefs be sent back to them. When Frontenac returned to America to replace de Denonville as governor in 1689, he brought with him, according to one account thirteen of the savages who survived the life in the galleys.³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, LXIV, 243.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, LXIII, 304, note 24. The authority for this number is Parkman. Margry, however, gives a list of those Iroquois whom the king had ordered to be released, twenty-one in number.

Little effect did this have since at this time England and France were engaged in a continental war, and the envoys of the British colony of New York were instructing the Indians not to think of peace, and were supplying them with powder and guns for their raid at Lachine on the Island of Montreal in August 1689, where they massacred two hundred Frenchmen and burned their homes. Had the mission colony not already been moved within the gates of Montreal, it would have suffered the same fate.

In the ensuing war with the English the reduction Iroquois fought under Frontenac against the English and their pagan brethren. At one time, in 1692, they were accused by Frontenac, never a fond admirer of their Jesuit teachers, of shirking their duty by not following up and annihilating the English and Iroquois under Major Schuyler, of being "satisfied with robbing the dead." There seems to be no question of a secret pact but the reduction Iroquois were only human, and their relatives and kinsfolk were the bulk of the British army. Their loyalty was praised to the French court by the Intendant de Champigny in the following year, perhaps because of the suspicion Frontenac cast on their name, perhaps because in November of that year they repulsed three hundred fifty Cayugas, Onondagas, and Senecas who attacked Kahnawakon.⁴⁰ The war chief of the reduction Indians was Kryn, the "Great Mohawk", who had gained fame among the Iroquois for leading his tribesmen against the Mohigans in 1669 before coming to Xavier Mission Colony with forty-two other Mohawk companions.⁴¹ In 1690 he led the raid against Schenectady and died the following year, slain by

⁴⁰ New York Colonial Documents, IX, 542.

⁴¹ Ibid., III, 250.

accident, the victim of an Algonquin ally.

Thus it was that the only further recruits at Xavier Mission Colony were the captives brought back in war. The work in the cantons had been stopped. When the Treaty of Ryswick was signed in 1697, peace did not bring the continued labor of the French priests in the cantons. Major Schuler^y and the Rev. Mr. Dellius, on returning from Quebec where they had arranged for a transfer of prisoners between the English and French, reported to Governor Bellemont; this report caused him to resolve to take definite steps to free New York of French religious influence.⁴² By 1700 the New York legislature had made a law deterring the penalty of hanging for any "popish priest" who should voluntarily come into their province. The reduction continued, even flourished, but the one leg of the two fold plan for the conversion of the Iroquois was effectively hindered and blocked by the hostile British in New York. Save for brief periods when the Jesuits returned, the Iroquois cantons were without priests, without Catholic instruction.

⁴²Kiniery, p. 420.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAN IN FOCUS

This thesis has attempted to narrate the first thirty years of the Xavier Mission Colony, which still exists today as an Indian reservation and Jesuit parish at Caughnawaga, Quebec. This mission colony or reduction was presented as one element in the twofold plan of setting up the Church among the Iroquois Indians. The partial success of the plan, the partial solution to the problem presented in the first and second chapters, had the element of permanency, as can readily be seen by a glance at the subsequent fifty years.

In the year 1716 because of soil exhausted by twenty years of unfertilized tilling, the Xavier Mission Colony moved once more, this time to its final installation, the site of present day Caughnawaga, three miles west of the previous site. The missionaries desired this more commodious and suitable location because the Iroquois attached to the English were once again trying to attract the reduction Indians back to the cantons, beyond the influence of their Catholic Faith.

The braves at Caughnawaga were ever ready to take up arms in support of the French; they seemed to glory in a dangerous existence. In 1729, 1735, and 1741 the warriors of Xavier Mission Colony fought side by side with the French

against the Sacs and Foxes and the Chickasaws in the south. From these wars they brought home captives and we are told that "the slaves were not burned at the stake as when the Iroquois were pagans;" but they were adopted into the families at Caughnawaga and instructed in the Faith.¹ It was war captives who made up the majority of adult Baptisms during these years.

Regular observance of all the old customs at the reduction was kept up, but there were also the old vices. In time, as they became more familiar with their French neighbors, as the enforcement of the government prohibition of selling liquor to the Indian got weaker, the brandy problem became more acute. The French gave bad example and, even worse, solicitation. In 1735 we read the familiar refrain in the Jesuit Relations: "Our savages find all the brandy they want and as soon as they are drunk, they are capable of any crime."² As the evil grew, the penance became heavier. The penance imposed by the Jesuits for drunkenness was to remain kneeling outside Church during Mass for ten or twelve days.

Let us return to the first thirty years, the period at Xavier Mission Colony to which we limited our study. The reduction was considered only as a partial solution to the problems of setting up the Church among the natives of upper New York. The plan was twofold; the complete success of the reduction was dependent on continued labor in the villages and long houses of the Iroquois, while this apostolate in the cantons was to be aided by Christian

¹Jesuit Relations, LXVIII, 277; LXX, 59.

²Ibid., LXVIII, 267-269.

Iroquois formed in the ways of the Christian religion at Xavier Mission Colony.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the British ascendancy soon made impossible the presence of the Jesuit missionary in upper New York. The English exploited hatred of the Iroquois for the French and supplied them with fire-arms. The Church was persecuted in the Iroquois cantons and persecution is not good for a young Church; some tolerance on the part of the state is desired. Thus the Iroquois alliance with the British was what has been called "the pivotal fact in American History."³ Because of it the best trade routes of the French to the interior were blocked, "the current in her arteries was stopped."⁴ Because of it Catholic attempts to proselytize the Iroquois in their home territory were doomed to failure.

On the part of the French, interest in the Iroquois waned as the impossibility of working among them in their home territory became more apparent. In 1701 Father Bruyas attempted to revive the work there, but he and his entire party were driven out seven years later, bringing with them what converts they had made to Xavier Mission Colony.⁵ The Jesuit missionaries now turned their efforts to other fields, to the Ohio and Mississippi Valley, to work among the Miami and the Illinois and Sioux tribes and tribes as far south as Louisiana. While the Recollects, Sulpicians, and diocesan clergy served the parishes of the French, the Jesuits chose to be missionaries of the frontier.⁶ Another

³Hunt, p. 6.

⁴Francis Parkman, The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century (Boston, 1922), p. 552.

⁵Jesuit Relations, I, 316-317.

⁶After New Orleans was set up as headquarters for all Louisiana in 1719, Capuchins, Carmelites, and Jesuits labored together in this field, the Jesuits concentrating on the frontier.

reason for the French missionaries treating the New York apostolate as a closed era was what might be called a decline of religious fervor in France, manifesting itself in New France in a decline in the numbers of missionary personnel and sporadic funds from fewer French benefactors. In seventeenth century France a religious phenomenon was taking place, a spiritual renewal. St. Francis de Sales was renewing lay sanctity with his Introduction to a Devout Life; St. Vincent de Paul was working among the poor of Paris and sending priests to the galley slaves, and interesting rich patrons in the missionary work of the Church; giants like St. John de Brebeuf were being sent to the mission fields all over the world, Smyrna, Syria, Cairo, China, and Canada. The eighteenth century brought an end to the spiritual renaissance. From about 1685 religious interest in the missions lost ground while spiritual laxity was evidenced by an increase in libertinism and philosophic rationalism. The movement culminated in the suppression of the Society of Jesus in France and her possessions in 1764, the result of the combined enmity of Madame de Pompadour, the Jansenists, the Philosophes, and the Gallicans.

The Jesuit missionary of 1696 could look back at the past thirty years with some satisfaction that all had not been wasted effort among the Iroquois. In the cantons, besides the hundreds of dying Iroquois babies and old people who had been baptized, the Gospel was preached and converts made for a little more than twenty years. All at least heard of the saving news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And now at the reduction there were about seven hundred of these same Iroquois living in a Christian environment, striving under the guidance of their Jesuit spiritual guides, to overcome the many obstacles to the Christian way of life to which they aspired.

The solution to the problem was for only the few -- those at the reduction -- but the Jesuit of 1696 could justly be proud of the record made by his companions and their neophytes. The obstacles of "savage culture" was combatted by religious instruction, in picture and song, adjusted to the undeveloped stage of the Iroquois culture. Church service played a pedagogic role in portraying dramatically the beauty of the worship of the Christian God; the Mass was sung in Iroquois by the congregation. Some individuals among the Iroquois did reach a high degree of sanctity, judging from their external behavior, such as the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, and these provided good example for the rest.

The problem of "superstition" was very prominent in the cantons because it was protected as a vested interest of the longueurs. These men were the interpreters of the dreams, and the enemies of the missionaries, always ready to ascribe a plague to their presence or a death to their baptismal ministrations. Perhaps too, the natural religious sense in all men, or what Father Wilhelm Schmidt calls "primitive revelation" was being made manifest in their dreams and their offerings to Agreskoué, whom the missionaries called a demon. The Indians' ideas about a supreme god were very confused, but the Iroquois believed that he had been given a protecting spirit with whom he had to get into contact by means of dreams, and these dreams were to be religiously obeyed. Instruction at the mission colony in religious doctrine, in the purer notion of a supreme God, "the only master of our lives", was furthered by the training of dogues. Reduction Iroquois away on the hunt would instruct their pagan tribesmen in the Christian concept of religion by means of pictures -- usually of the four last things. Before being accepted at Xavier Mission

Colony the candidate had to profess his disbelief in dreams and anyone practicing any type of sorcery was expelled. Pagan customs were supplanted by Christian devotions, the Mass, the Sacraments, the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament — before and after work in the fields. In the last sickness of Catherine Gandeakteua, her husband, instead of resorting to dreams for her cure, requested prayers for her recovery and when she died asked that the rosary be said for her soul.⁷

A pledge to remain with one wife and not to get drunk was exacted of those who came to the "praying castle" near Montreal. These two obstacles to Christian living among the pagan Iroquois were zealously guarded against by the Jesuit missionaries at Xavier. The Holy Family Confraternity was employed by them as an instrument to train the natives in the concept of a Christian family. Intemperance was the perennial problem among these people, and even today the principal of Kateri Takakwitha School informs the Iroquois students individually that their hereditary weakness is to drink to excess, a weakness that must be acknowledged and faced. Some races of people are biologically more susceptible to intoxication than others, and the Iroquois is high in this field. But while the reduction Iroquois were to a degree protected against the evil by the Jesuits and by a legal prohibition against the sale of liquor, in the cantons they enjoyed firewater in such quantities that

⁷Jesuit Relations, LXXII, 683.

in 1735 Father Nau declared that they were on the decrease "because of intoxicants supplied by the English."⁸

In place here is a tribute to the great men and women of Xavier Mission Colony's past, a word for some of the outstanding missionaries and Indians down through the years until at the present day we come upon a person who is both Iroquois and missionary, --Father Michael Jakobs, S.J., the first priestly vocation from among the Iroquois, now working among his people at St. Regis, Quebec.

Our first tribute is to Father Paul Le Jeune, as the Jesuit who first conceived the idea of a reduction in Canada after the manner of his Spanish brethren in Paraguay. To Father Pierre Raffeix is due the credit for inviting the Iroquois to stay with him at his new parish of Kentake¹, and to him belongs the title of founder. Father Pierre Joseph Chaumonot, figures prominently in Canadian history as one of the first missionaries to the Iroquois, as founder of the Holy Family Confraternity, and father to the dispersed Hurons at Lorette; he deserves the thanks of Xavier Mission Colony for having instructed its first neophytes in the summer of 1668. Father Jacques Frasin, is perhaps the most deserving of mention, since it was during his eleven years as superior of the mission that the colony took on the form of a reduction. He surely merits the title of second founder. Next in line for a word of recognition is Father Pierre Gholenee, spiritual director and later biographer of Kateri Takakwitha, and many years at the mission.

⁸ Ibid., LXVIII, 277.

Father Jacques Bruyas writer of an Iroquois catechism, prayer book, and grammar of the Iroquois language, and peacemaker for the French, was buried at the mission colony in 1712 among the Indians for whom he labored forty-six years. Father Claude Chauchetiere¹ is the person to whom we are most indebted for information in the Jesuit Relations pertinent to the reduction. There were long years from the suppression of the Society of Jesus until the day when a Jesuit once again in the person of Father Samuel Granger, S.J. was installed as superior at Okauchnawaga in 1903, on the eve of the Octave of the Feast of St. Ignatius and the anniversary of the reestablishment of the Society of Jesus throughout the world. During that time two names stand out as worthy of mention. One is Father Joseph Marcoux who from 1819 to 1855 labored at Okauchnawaga striving to better the spiritual and social conditions of the Indians. To him is due credit for the splendid stone Church still standing. An outstanding philologist, he wrote a complete grammar of the Iroquois tongue. After Father Marcoux the Oblate Fathers had charge of the mission for thirty-seven long years. His Excellency Bishop Guillaume Forbes spent the first years of his priesthood as a devoted pastor at Okauchnawaga, and the Iroquois petitioned the Bishop of Quebec not to take him away from them in 1902. As a parish priest, Bishop Forbes did much work tracing the genealogy of his parishioners, straightening out a goodly number of marriages in the process.

Among the Indians deserving of mention first place as quasi-founder of the mission goes to Catherine Gandeakteua, a captive from the Iroquois nations who induced her Iroquois husband, Tonschoten, to live at the mission. She also began at Xavier the Holy Family Confraternity whose fruits she had

experienced among the Hurons. First in sanctity is the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, the Lily of the Mohawks, who some day may be raised to our altars. In war, Kryn, the Great Mohawk, holds first rank as the outstanding captain of the reduction warriors. Perhaps the number one dogimus was Hot Powder who went back to his canton during the early years of the reduction and received a ready audience from his Mohawk brethren, to whom he had come to spread the good news.

The Jesuits of the past have four confreres now at work in the thriving parish of Caughnawaga, and the Indians of yesteryear are memorialized in the shrine to Kateri Tekakwitha and a modern grade and junior high school dedicated to the young Mohawk maiden in 1954. The town and government-owned reservation were preserved when the St. Lawrence Seaway project took pains to avoid tearing down buildings of the mission compound that have a historic past, dear to Canada. The occupations of the inhabitants through the years have slowly changed. Farming has never become popular among the Iroquois. In the early years hunting, trapping, and fishing were more to their liking. Later they were found to be expert at timber rafting on the tricky St. Lawrence River. In 1886 construction began on a bridge across the St. Lawrence near Caughnawaga and provided jobs for a few Iroquois. Indians were found to be so adept at the deafening, dangerous, highly skilled work of riveting that they were soon hired for structural steel work all over Canada. During the building boom of the twenties in New York and other United States cities they started to travel south. Many of them worked on the George Washington Bridge, the Empire State Building, and Rockefeller Center. Their work in "high steel" is seasonal and, for that matter, much like the

hunting, and trapping and warring of their ancestors. It is dangerous work and every so often someone falls from a height and is killed. On August 29, 1907, during the erection of the Quebec Bridge, a span collapsed killing 96 men of whom 35 were from Caughnawaga. Back on the reservation this is always spoken of as "the disaster." When one construction job is finished the men come back to Caughnawaga until once again the spirit moves them to travel to where the grapevine brings word of another job opening in structural steel.

Perhaps most noteworthy of all the activities of the parish is the mixed Iroquois choir, begun in 1927 by Father Conrad Hauser, employing to good effect the musical Iroquois language. Taking advantage of the approved custom of using the Iroquois tongue for the liturgical song, Father Martial Garen, the present superior is hard at work revising the Kyrie of the Iroquois and editing the liturgical music.

Among the other parish activities that give evidence that the Church is the center of the village, which is almost totally Catholic, besides the Sodality, Holy Name Society, Nocturnal Adoration every first Friday, we find the old standby of the early years -- the Holy Family Confraternity whose purpose is to make a Loretto of every household.

APPENDIX I

MAP OF THE SUCCESSIVE SITES OF
XAVIER MISSION COLONY



APPENDIX II

LIST OF THE SUPERIORS OF XAVIER MISSION COLONY

Jesuit Fathers

Pierre Raffeix	1667-1671
Jacques Fremin	1671-1682
Jacques Bruyas	1682-1684
Glaude Chanchetiere	1684-1688
Jacques Bruyas	1688-1693
Jacques de Lamber- ville	1693-1695
Pierre Cholenee	1695-1699
Jacques Bruyas	1699-1709
Julien Garnier	1709-1711
Pierre Cholenee	1711-1722
Pierre de Langrene	1722-1723
Pierre de Lauzon	1723-1727
Joseph de Lafiteau	1727-1729
Pierre de Lauzon	1729-1734

Jesuit Fathers

Jacques de la Bretonniere	1734-1735
Luc-François Nau	1735-1743
J. B. Tournois	1743-1751
Antoine Gordon	1751-1752
Nicolas de Goumor	1752-1753
Antoine Gordon	1753-1755
J.-B. de Neuville	1755-1759
Joseph Huguet	1759-1782
Jean-Baptiste Well	1782

Diocesan Clergy

J.-B. Dumouchel	1783
Pierre-Antoine Gallet	1783-1784
Laurent Ducharme	1784-1793
Antoine Rinfret	1794-1802

Diocesan Clergy

Antoine Van Felson	1802-1808
Antoine Rinfret	1808-1814
Pierre-Nicolas Dufresne	1814-1819
Joseph Marcoux	1819-1855

Jesuit Fathers

Georges Brodeur	1951-1954
Martial Caron	1954

Oblate Fathers

Eugene Antoine	1855-1864
Jean-Claude Bayeux	1864
Michel-Victor Durtin	1864-1892

Diocesan Priest

Bishop Guillaume Forbes	1892-1903
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Jesuit Fathers

Samuel Granger	1903-1904
Arthur Malançon	1904-1906
Samuel Granger	1906-1913
Joseph Gres	1913-1922
Samuel Granger	1922-1923
Onésime Lacouture	1923-1927
Conrad Hauser	1927-1932
Wilfrid Ménard	1932-1936
Conrad Hauser	1936-1937
Reul Lalonde	1937-1951

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mr. Andrew Anthony Connolly, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

January 6, 1958
Date

Charles H. Metzger, S.J.
Signature of Adviser